

FAIRY TALES (FROM THE ORIENT)



FREDERICK
H. MARTENS



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FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

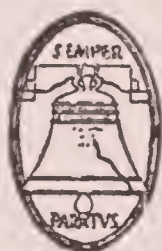


Seif met her, as though by chance, in the palace gardens.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

By
FREDERICK H. MARTENS

*Illustrated in Color and
Black and White by*
GEORGE HOOD



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE HISTORY OF ABU HASSAN— <i>An Arabian Tale</i> . . .	1
THE BLACK PEARL— <i>A Tale of Bahrein</i>	18
MAROUF, THE COBBLER OF CAIRO— <i>An Egyptian Tale</i> . .	24
THE EYES OF KANOULA— <i>A Hindoo Legend</i>	59
THE WHITE BIRD— <i>A Kalmuck Tale</i>	74
THE GARDENS OF IREM— <i>A Persian Tale</i>	82
THE UNGRATEFUL BRAHMIN— <i>A Tale from the Sanskrit</i> .	101
THE PRINCE WHO LEARNED THE WEAVER'S TRADE— <i>An Armenian Tale</i>	114
THE FLOWER-FOOL OF TSIANG-LO— <i>A Chinese Tale</i> . .	125
THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH— <i>A Japanese Tale</i>	160
MIJA-DSIN-USIN, THE HUNDRED AND ONE TIMES BEAUTIFUL— <i>A Kabyle Tale</i>	169
THE AZURE LILY— <i>A Tale of Saracen Spain</i>	181
THE KNOTTED NOSE— <i>A Mongolian Tale</i>	191
ROTHISEN AND KEO-FA— <i>A Cambodian Tale</i>	199
THE LOVELY AREVAHATE— <i>A Tale of the Caucasus</i> . .	206
THE MULLAH IDRIS— <i>A Syrian Tale</i>	223
THE PIT THE CADI DUG— <i>A Mosuli Tale</i>	231
THE LOCK IN THE XA XA CAVERN— <i>An Arabian Nights' Tale as Told in Seventeenth Century Europe</i>	239
SOURCES	291

ILLUSTRATIONS

COLORED

Seif met her, as though by chance, in the palace gardens	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
		FACING
		PAGE
And there he saw a city with lofty walls, and palaces and rooftops gleaming with gold	26	
The Sultan received her alone in his great tent of red silk . . .	116	
He now came to another room, where stood baskets and basins made of pure gold, and which contained precious stones, pearls and other jewels	246	

BLACK AND WHITE

There he sat, looking worn and weary, with a great bundle of old boots on his back	80
Tschou had just finished watering, and was seated alone among his flowers	136
Prince Rothisen gently caressed the birds and thanked them .	202

PREFACE

IN these "Fairy Tales from the Orient," collected from a wide variety of sources and retold in this volume, one main point has been kept consistently in view: that they have a genuine "story" interest, that their telling really "adorns a tale." Whether poesy, sheer fantasy, humor or simple charm of incident or narrative be the leading feature of a tale, the idea in mind has been, first of all, that it must be a real story, and one which will be enjoyed primarily as such.

The writer has allowed himself entire freedom in the retelling of these tales, and has taken such liberties with their original texts as American standards of presentation seemed to justify. In harmony with the avowed purpose of the book he has expurgated and extended, altered and adapted as appeared best, and for this no apologies are offered.

The sources have been indicated at the end of the book, but the appeal, as already mentioned, is not a folklore one. Its purpose—appropriate enough in the case of a volume of Oriental wonder stories—is that of the professional story teller of "The Thousand and One Nights" who, squatting in the market-place of Bagdad or Bassourah, aimed to delight rather than instruct his auditors.

FREDERICK H. MARTENS.

Rutherford, N. J.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

THE HISTORY OF ABU HASSAN

(An Arabian Tale)

ABU HASSAN, the poor hunchback of Kahirah, returned to his home late one night after hours spent listening to the teller of fairy tales in the market-place. As he passed through the streets he thought sadly of his poverty, and made all sorts of plans to acquire wealth. And by the time he had reached his little white hut, which shone like silver in the moonlight, his visions of fancied wealth had made him feel quite happy.

Though he went in softly and tried to lie down noiselessly on the wretched pallet in one corner of the bare room in which he slept, he woke his old mother. At once she began to scold him as the greatest ne'er-do-well in Kahirah, unwilling to work, who would rather hunger and let his mother starve, than cast his net in the river. A skilled fisherman, even though a hunchback, could thus support both his mother and himself. Besides, it was always possible that he might draw up some great treasure sunk in the bed of the stream in the days of old.

As Abu Hassan listened to this scolding he felt annoyed, for his mother knew that she herself had sold his net in order to buy *haschisha*, the herb of joy, of which she was inordinately fond. He rose, left the house, and walked through the moonlit streets.

Stopping before the open doors of a caravanserai, he looked into the court, where a caravan was fitting out with a great deal of confusion. A tall old man with a long white beard came to him, and asked whether he would care to travel with him as his servant to Mecca, for that was where the caravan was bound. Now Abu Hassan was still angry because of his mother's words, and especially because she had mentioned his humped back, regarding which he was very sensitive. So he at once agreed to go, and began to help load the camels kneeling on the ground. He perspired freely, for he was a man unused to labor, but his anger drove him on. There were some fifty camels in all, which were loaded with great iron-bound chests, and corded bales and sacks, as well as poles and covers for tents at night, and a closed litter, meant for the merchant's two daughters. This litter was richly adorned with gold and purple.

When, after much hard labor, all was ready, the other camels having risen, standing patiently, and only the beast which was to bear the litter—it had snow-white hair—still kneeling, they called out to Abu Hassan to fling himself into the dust and look down to

earth, while the merchant's daughters entered their litter. Abu Hassan was annoyed at this haughtiness. Then all rose again, everyone went to his own place, and the camels, one after another, strode out of the caravanserai in a long row, and took the road to Mecca. The sun, rising from the edge of the earth, sent its first rays heavenward, and a lark flew up into the blue, singing joyously, just as they passed out of the city gates.

The caravan moved on its way with due speed. The sun rose higher and the heat grew intense, and they rested. On the edge of the desert creatures appeared and disappeared again, and the sun went down. Food was prepared, they ate and drank and slept, and then all rose again and reloaded the beasts, and the file of camels trod along in their accustomed path, and the sun again sent up its first rays into the heavens above them, and rose higher, and again they rested, and again the day drew to an end as before. Abu Hassan rode a swift, handsome steed, which danced beneath him, and he carried glittering weapons which gave him unending pleasure. He did not know exactly how he came to be riding and carrying weapons. But since he thought he would like to know how long they would be under way, he dropped a little stone into his pocket every evening. After a time, it is true, he was carrying about a large number of little stones. Yet he had no idea of how long the caravan had been under way,

4 FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

for he could not count as far as he had stones. This made one of the women in the litter laugh, one evening, so that he heard her. It may be that she had noticed him pouring the stones from one hand into the other with an embarrassed air.

The way through the desert was ever the same, save when the caravan came to a well at which there were palm trees, with sometimes a little group of huts. They might have passed some ten of these wells, or perhaps, fifty, or a hundred. At last Abu Hassan was carrying about two pounds of little stones. Then, one noon, he emptied his pockets of them and gathered no more. So he did not know how many days or weeks had passed when they finally reached the tomb of the Prophet.

He went into the anteroom of the shrine. He admired the artistic rugs which hung there, and regretted his ignorance, which prevented him from reading the wise and beautiful sayings written on the walls in golden letters. Suddenly he heard the tinkling of the anklets of a young girl's feet behind him, and bowed as one of the merchant's dark-eyed daughters passed him. He felt that he loved her, and loved her in vain. Sad at heart, he went out into the lonely desert, and thought of many poems which he knew by heart, and which he would have liked to recite to her.

When he returned to the camp in the evening, his master sent for him, and said that he had taken a fancy

to him and was going to marry him to one of his daughters. In addition he would make him a present of two thousand *dinars* of gold, with which he could start a business of some kind. And so the wedding was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony. There were many rich and distinguished guests, and Abu Hassan sat at the head of the table, surprising all with his grace and good breeding, and his clever and well-phrased speeches. The next day he began seriously to consider how to invest the two thousand *dinars* his father-in-law had given him to the best advantage. After much thought he hit upon the following plan.

He had noticed that there were broad stretches of fine pasture-land outside the city, which were but little used. The people of Mecca kept hardly any cattle, for they earned money more easily by lodging the strangers who at all times flocked to their city. So Abu Hassan said to himself: "I can buy one sheep for two *dinars*, so I will get a thousand sheep for two thousand *dinars*. These sheep I will pasture outside the city. The following year, counting in the lambs, they will have more than doubled in number. Then I will sell them and double my money. After that I will go to my father-in-law and tell him of the great profit I had made. He will be surprised, and so pleased that he will give me more money. But I will not content myself with such small gains. I would then fit out a caravan with goods that were very cheap

6 FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

in Mecca, but very dear in distant lands. Then I would take my caravan to those distant lands and there sell for a hundred *dinars* goods which had cost me only a *dinar* in Mecca. When all had been sold, I would have as many hundreds of *dinars* as I had had single ones before. Once all this money was in my possession I would no longer remain a merchant. Instead, I would gather a large army, giving each soldier a high wage, set out for Egypt, conquer the whole country, and make myself its sultan. Then my subjects would have to give me, day by day, as much money as I wanted, and I would build a very large and solid tower of the hardest stone in which to store my wealth. And all those who had formerly made fun of my hump should be executed."

After Abu Hassan had carefully thought this all out, he took the bag with two thousand *dinars* in his hand, and went through the streets of Mecca, calling out loudly that he wished to buy sheep at two *dinars* apiece. Then he walked on ahead to the pasture, followed by the people who had sheep to sell, and in this way soon collected a herd of a thousand sheep. Then he turned his large herd out to graze, and for days at a time took pleasure in watching them as they neatly and busily cropped the grass. When the sun went down and the sheep had eaten their fill, he drove them to a spacious old building, in a half-ruined condition, which stood in the fields, shut the gate to prevent their

getting out, and returned home to tell his wife what he had done.

But wolves prowled about the outskirts of the city by night. They scented the numerous sheep, tracked them to the place in which they were confined, leaped over the gate of the old building, and killed and ate some of the sheep. The others who had not been killed crowded together so closely in a corner in their fright that they were suffocated, and there Abu Hassan found them dead early the following morning, when he came to let them out. Abu Hassan's first impulse was to break out into lamentations, but he told himself that the wise man shows no weakness in the hour of trial, but thinks instead of some remedy for his misfortune. Since the sheep had suffocated, and the law forbids the sale of animals which have perished in this way, he could not dispose of the meat. So he set to work with some other men, stripped the beasts of their skins and left the bodies where they were. As he drove back to Mecca with a wagon piled high with the skins, he met a merchant who asked him about them. Abu Hassan told him his tale and the man consoled him, saying, "Twenty days' journey from Mecca is a land called Kublai. There all the men wear high sheep-skin caps, and for that reason sheepskins are much sought after and high prices are paid for them. The merchants who take such skins there make a great deal of money. Join the caravan which sets out for Kublai

8 FAIRY TALES FROM THE ORIENT

to-morrow morning—I am going with it myself—and sell your skins there!” So Abu Hassan went home, bade farewell to his wife, and set out with the caravan. The other merchants with whom he discussed his plan all approved of it, and he picked up much valuable knowledge while talking with them. When they reached Kublai all the merchants spread out their goods in a special market in a large and populous city, and Abu Hassan sat with his skins in a handsome tent. Soon the merchants of Kublai, who had heard of his skins, arrived and began to bargain with him. Yet since Abu Hassan’s travelling companions had told him what to ask they could not get the better of him, and he finally sold all his sheep-skins for twenty-thousand *dinars*. In this way he increased the sum his father-in-law had given him tenfold, and he thanked Allah and blessed his fate.

After he had carefully counted the money, he put it into two bags, took them in his hands and went to the inn at which he was staying. There a merchant from India stepped up to him and spoke to him. He told him that he had visited many countries and seen all varieties of goods known, but that the most precious commodity in the world was the true ambergris. Many gladly paid a high price merely to look at it, for its sight was especially strengthening for the eyes. True ambergris had the gift of attracting other money to its possessor, who grew in wealth of every kind.

The man who ate a bit of the true ambergris became wiser than all other men, and his wife more beautiful than other women. In Kublai the true ambergris was not as highly valued as in Mecca, and the merchants who carried some back with them could gain a hundredfold.

“It so happens,” said the Indian merchant, “that I possess a small supply of this most precious substance, and having taken a fancy to you, I am willing to sell you some very, very cheap, a small piece for ten thousand *dinars*.” With that he drew out a little sandalwood box, opened it and showed Abu Hassan the true ambergris—a small globule of a reddish-brown color the size of a walnut, lying on a bed of blue silk.

Abu Hassan was delighted with the offer. He thanked the foreign merchant heartily for his great kindness, and regretted the fact that he had only twenty thousand *dinars*, and hence could acquire only two pieces of this rare and precious substance. These two pieces, however, he was willing to purchase at once, lest the seller change his mind, and with that he passed the two bags of money into his hands. Then the Indian merchant drew a second little box from his pocket, showed Abu Hassan the globule of the true ambergris it contained and let him verify its contents. In addition to the true ambergris, because of his affection for him, he also presented Abu Hassan with the two boxes, though these were very costly, and as

a rule he charged extra for them. And then he went his way.

Abu Hassan joyfully hurried back to his friends, showed them the little boxes and declared he would make a great profit on the sale of the ambergris in Mecca. But the merchants all began to laugh until the tears rolled down their cheeks, and when Abu Hassan asked them why they were laughing they explained that the pretended Indian merchant was a famous thief, who had already deceived many people, and that there was no such thing as the "true ambergris" about which he told his fairy tales. The globules of ambergris were in reality nothing but pellets of worthless gum.

This news greatly saddened Abu Hassan. He went off to a lonely spot and wept bitterly. Then he reflected that this setback, too, had been destined him and that it was well, after all, to be done with it. Perhaps fortune might still do him some unexpected kindness as in the case of his sheep. With these thoughts he started out to return to Mecca, alone and unburdened, for this time he carried no wares with him.

When he had travelled nineteen days and had but a single day's journey still before him, he met a man who invited him to spend his last night on the road in his house. Abu Hassan accepted the invitation. He was well received, and his host's wife gave him plenty to eat and drink, but kept modestly in the background,

though she listened to all that was said. After they had eaten his host asked Abu Hassan to tell him his story. So Abu Hassan began to tell the whole tale, how he had left Kahirah, had married and been given the two thousand *dinars*, and all his subsequent adventures. But he did not mention that the true ambergris was nothing but worthless gum, for he was ashamed to say that he had been tricked. He showed the two little boxes and praised the wonderful powers of their contents. His host and his host's wife were both greatly astonished at Abu Hassan's experiences and, since it had grown dark in the meanwhile, they led him to the guest chamber and went to bed themselves.

At midnight, however, the door of Abu Hassan's room opened and his host appeared. After telling Abu Hassan not to be alarmed, he spoke to him as follows: "I have a fortune of a hundred thousand *dinars* which is hidden under the floor of the eastern corner of this room. I am not very bright myself and for that reason have always been called 'Lackwit,' though I am handsome and well-built. So I married a woman who, though she was homely was very wise, hoping that my children would take after me in looks and after their mother as regards intelligence! Now I beg of you, for the love of Allah, sell me one of your pieces of the true ambergris for the hundred thousand *dinars*, even though you make no great profit on the sale. I will eat the ambergris and grow wise, and, if

anything should happen to my wife—she is not strong—I might have better luck with another.”

After this speech he dug in the eastern corner of the room, drew forth a bag of *dinars* and handed it to Abu Hassan. And the latter said that out of sympathy for his misfortune he would let him have the ambergris for the trifling sum he had mentioned, and gave him one of the little boxes. And the man thanked him and left the room.

Abu Hassan was so happy at this unexpected good fortune that he could not go to sleep; and in a short time the door once more opened and his host's wife appeared. She in turn explained to him that she had one hundred thousand *dinars* hidden under the floor in the western corner of the room. “Being a homely but keen-witted woman,” she said, “I married a handsome but stupid man in the hope that our children would take after their father so far as looks are concerned, and after me with regard to their intelligence. But, alas, my children are both witless and ugly! Therefore, for the love of Allah, sell me a piece of the true ambergris, for a hundred thousand *dinars*. I will eat the ambergris and become beautiful and, if anything should happen to my husband—for he is not strong—I might have better luck with another.” After this speech she dug in the western corner of the room, and handed Abu Hassan the bag of *dinars*. He told her what he had already told her husband, and gave

her his remaining box of ambergris, whereupon she thanked him and went away.

The following morning the man and his wife took leave of Abu Hassan with a thousand kind wishes. The latter, laden with his two hundred thousand *dinars*, hurried on, panting, to Mecca, where he arrived that very evening and was joyfully received by his wife.

When Abu Hassan thought of all his troubles and difficulties, and how twice he had lost everything only to win it back again through some unexpected stroke of luck, he decided to invest his fortune securely, at a safe interest, even though that interest were small. So he began to examine those houses in Mecca which were for sale. He thought of buying one which he could turn into an inn, where the strangers who came to the city would be well entertained, and would be glad to pay a high price for good food and accommodations. It was then that a rich man came to him and told him that he owned a whole quarter of the city, worth at least two hundred thousand *dinars*. "I have learned," he said, "that my enemies have complained of me to the Caliph. Hence I wish to flee and sell all I have cheaply. If you give me the two hundred thousand *dinars*, Abu Hassan, you can have the whole quarter of the city." So Abu Hassan bought the whole quarter of the city, and the very next day moved into the finest house that stood in it.

Now his wife was curious to see every room in the

house. It was already evening, so Abu Hassan lighted a wax taper, handed it to his wife, and led her through the entire building. Finally they came to the highest attic, directly under the roof, and there they found a great pile of hay and straw heaped up, left by the former owner. While they were congratulating themselves on this unexpected find, a large rat suddenly rushed out of the straw, probably frightened by the light, and ran directly toward Abu Hassan's wife. The latter was so terrified that she screamed and let fall the taper. At once the hay and straw were ablaze. Both hurried back to the stairs, but only Abu Hassan reached them, for his wife was hampered by her clothes and the flames barred her way. The whole house burned down. A strong wind arose, other houses in turn caught fire, and while Abu Hassan stood in the street, tearing his hair and mourning his misfortune, the entire quarter burned to the ground. When he realized this, however, he once more reflected that it already had been written down in the book of fate, and that he must resign himself to his loss.

The following morning he sought out his father-in-law and told him the whole of his lamentable tale, including his last crowning misfortune. He appeared before him looking like a scarecrow, just as he had at first entered his service, for he had put on his old rags in order to save his handsome clothes while he showed his wife the house. But Abu Hassan's father-

in-law, when he had heard his story, grew very angry, and drove him out of the house with unkind words and blows.

So Abu Hassan wandered back again to the market-place. There he spied a fellow-townsmen of his from Kahirah. The latter asked him what he had been doing and when Abu Hassan told his story, encouraged him to go back home. "There," said he, "you will find people who know you. A poor man has no friends in a strange land. I will take you on as a muleteer in my caravan." That suited Abu Hassan, and he set forth with the caravan from Mecca that very same day.

Again many days went by and Abu Hassan thought with regret of his first journey and the white camel carrying the litter, from whose neck hung a little silver bell. Yet it seemed to him that on this occasion time passed more swiftly, for before he knew it he once more found himself at home in his hut. And his mother was again scolding him for being the greatest ne'er-do-well in Kahirah, unwilling to work, who would rather hunger and let his mother starve than cast his net in the river. A skilled fisherman, even though a hunchback, could thus support both his mother and himself. Besides, it was always possible that he might draw up some great treasure sunk in the bed of the stream in the days of old.

As she spoke these words, Abu Hassan awoke—and it turned out that he never moved from the spot. He

had gone neither to Mecca nor to Kublai, but had been sound asleep. And not a number of years and months had passed, but merely a couple of hours. All that had happened to him he had dreamt since he had been lying on his wretched pallet. So Abu Hassan sighed, told his mother that she herself had sold his net in order to buy *haschisha*, the herb of joy, of which she was inordinately fond, and then, rising, left the house and went out into the streets in the direction of the river. And as he walked he thought to himself:

“Our life is the dream of an hour though we think it lasts for eighty years. Man is a wave in the stream that flashes in the moonlight and vanishes the same instant. The inhabitants of a city live like the gnats that dance about the crown of a linden-tree as the last rays of the setting sun touch its topmost leaves, while the mists of night are rising from the ground. We set our heart on riches, or beauty, or power. We worry and labor and yet we are like the leaves that fall from the tree and which the wind bloweth where it listeth. And struggles, love, riches, armies, cities, and whole nations are not real, but only images formed within our brain, and we think they are round about us.

“There are clever merchants who with two thousand *dinars* make twenty thousand, and with twenty thousand two hundred thousand, and with two hundred thousand two thousand times a hundred thousand, a sum beyond a man’s power to imagine. For such

is the value of an entire quarter of the city of Mecca, now burned down—Mecca, a city of great palaces of white marble, with windows of golden lattice-work, fountains, rich shops and luxurious burghers, who have slaves going before them carrying torches when they enter their houses at night. All that people have gained with two thousand *dinars*. Yet, alas, all this was but smoke which rose in the air, leaving nothing but ashes! Yes, there was a man who wished to be a king, and would have been one, owing to the fruitfulness of the sheep. But he was like the flame of a taper blown out by the wind of fate. Had he been able before that to take but a single step in advance, then the flame would have touched a straw heap, and the wind's breath would have fanned it to a devouring fire, swallowing cities and rising to the skies, visible to all men on earth!"

THE BLACK PEARL

(A Tale of Bahrein)

ONE day when Amry, the pearl-diver, had gone to the shop of the court jeweller of Oman, to sell him the pearls he had found beneath the waters of the isle of Bahrein, the beautiful Anouba, wife of the sultan, stopped her palanquin at the merchant's door. Coming toward him, she held out a wonderful black pearl, from which the light drew golden reflections.

"Have you a pearl to match this which you can sell me?" she asked.

The jeweller took the pearl, laid it on a cushion of silk and studied it, his hands crossed upon his breast, like a Brahmin adoring his god. And then he shook his head with discouragement and replied, "This pearl has no equal in the world." And Amry, who had drawn near, softly echoed the merchant's words.

"Then it would be useless for me to try to find the mate of this pearl of mine?" asked the beautiful Anouba.

"Princess," replied the merchant, bowing to the ground, "ask me for emeralds as large as pigeons' eggs, ask me for translucent jade-stones, ask me for cabo-

chons of topaz, glowing like tigers' eyes, and for those rubies of Ceylon which shed fire by night. Those, by the mercy of Allah, your slave can lay at your feet! Yet before another pearl like yours be found, the stars of heaven will fall in a shower of gold on your palace roof!" While they spoke the Princess who had glanced round the shop from beneath her veil, noticed that Amry, leaning against a bamboo pillar, was looking at the pearl.

"Is this man your slave?" the beautiful Anouba asked the merchant.

Amry proudly raised his head. "I am Amry, the pearl-diver. The son of the sea is no man's slave!"

"Amry," said Anouba, "do you also say that the equal of my black pearl cannot be found?"

"In a bay of the island of Bahrein," said Amry, "two hundred feet under water, lies a coral-reef on which old Phangar, the most famous diver of the Gulf, found the black pearl which Prince Meschad wears in the pommel of his dagger. It is possible that the mate to your pearl might be found there. But Phangar never again dived into that abyss, and he trembles with terror when he passes over it in his boat."

"Why should he tremble?" asked Anouba, filled with curiosity.

"When Phangar, his left foot clinging to the leaden weight which carried him to the bottom, shot through the water, he passed through a whirlpool of green

waves which boiled and swirled around him like the lava of the volcanoes. So great was the shock that when his plummet reached bottom he fell forward on his hands and knees. Yet, though the sharp points of the coral, whose cut pricks like hot iron, drew blood from a hundred wounds, he did not complain. He at once set to work, and had already gathered a hundred oysters in his linen bag when it seemed as though the whole reef were rising around him, and a floating mass, gray like the coral itself, advanced slowly toward him, stretching forth long tentacles as flexible as forest creepers. One of these tentacles touched Phangar's breast and attached itself there, but Phangar could not cry out. A gigantic squid, floating but a few yards away from him, had fixed him with its pale green eyes, luminous with a cold flame.

"When Phangar's comrades, who had remained in the boat, felt his life-line suddenly stiffen, they hastened to draw him to the surface—only just in time. The diver had lost consciousness, and on his breast was the mark left by the squid. Three days later, when he opened the pearls he had brought up, one of them contained the superb black pearl which Prince Meschid afterwards bought for a fabulous price."

"That is well," said the sultan's wife. "Since you know where the black pearls are to be found, you must plunge in the Gulf of Bahrein for me, descend to the coral-reef, slay the monster who guards

the treasure, and bring back the pearl I desire."

Amry replied, "Who knows whether there are two pearls equally matched in all the seas of the world? And why should I risk my life to satisfy your caprice, even though you be the sultan's wife? Yet for the sake of my mother, who is old and infirm, and whom I would fain take far from this sea-coast, whose air lies heavy on her lungs, I will dive for you for a price."

"What is the price you ask?" queried the Princess Anouba.

"No less than twenty thousand pieces of gold," said Amry.

"So be it," replied Anouba. "You ask a great sum. Yet, if you can bring me a pearl as large and beautiful as this, then you shall have the twenty thousand pieces of gold."

And Amry said, "I will go to seek the black pearl at the bottom of the abyss of Bahrein, even though I have to leave my flesh and bones on the craggy points of the coral-reef."

The following day, after having taken leave of his aged mother, to whom he said nothing of his intentions, however, Amry took his boat and set off in the direction in which he knew the treasure was to be found. When he had shot to the bottom of the sea, he made haste to fill his linen bag with the largest and finest oysters on the reef. And then, just as he was about to rise once more to the surface, he saw in a rocky

niche, an oyster of monster size. He stretched forth his hand and grasped it, and at that moment the giant squid which made its home on the coral bank, suddenly wound its tentacles around him. Amry seemed lost. Yet Allah the Compassionate watches over those who honor their parents! He does not suffer them to go down to destruction. From the heights of his golden, irradiant throne in Paradise, whose light is like a glistening star, the omniscient eye of Allah beheld Amry struggling beneath the gloomy waters of the sea with the squid. Slightly, very slightly, Allah nodded his head, and angels in their thousands, to whom Allah's unspoken thought comes with the clear sweetness of a celestial voice, hastened to do his bidding. At either hand they thrust back the clouds which hid it from the sight of man, and for one brief moment the light of Allah's throne was unveiled in all its ineffable brightness. And in that moment, before the clouds closed round the throne again, its light clove through the spaces of the seven heavens, through the airs of earth and the water of the sea. Like a sword of flame it struck the monster beneath the waves, who, as it touched it, turned into a black and shrivelled mass.

Amry, released from the embrace which was suffocating him, knew who had intervened on his behalf, and his last waking thought was a prayer of gratitude to Allah the Merciful. His linen bag had been torn

from him in the struggle with the squid, but when his comrades drew him to the surface of the water, torn, bleeding and unconscious, he still held tightly clasped in his hand the monstrous oyster he had torn from the rock a few moments before.

When he opened the oyster in his humble home, behold, it contained a pearl even larger and more beautiful than that of the Princess Anouba, with reflections even more golden than those of the gem set in the hilt of Prince Meschid's dagger!

In the morning he took it to the sultan's palace, and when the Princess Anouba had seen and examined it, she clapped her hands with delight, called for the treasurer, and Amry's twenty thousand pieces of gold were counted out to him forthwith. Never did Amry plunge for pearls again. A rich man, he took his aged mother to the pleasant city of Yemen, where he bought a fine house in whose rose-gardens the nightingales sang, and the voice of the sea was never heard. There his mother recovered her health, and he himself married and lived happily for many a long year.

MAROUF, THE COBBLER OF CAIRO

(*An Egyptian Tale*)

ONCE upon a time there lived in the city of Cairo a cobbler named Marouf, who found it so hard to make a living, that half the time he did not have enough to eat. Naturally, he was low-spirited most of the time. One evening, after an especially unprofitable day, he was seized with desperation. He had left his empty shop and was wandering aimlessly through the streets when he was overtaken by a sudden storm. Wet to the skin he took refuge in a ruined hermit cell near the Adiliye Mosque, and bewailed his misfortunes while he watched the falling rain. Suddenly the wall of the cell split in twain, and a tall figure whose aspect filled him with terror stood before him.

"Why do you disturb me this evening?" asked the *djinn*. "I have been living here two hundred years, and no one has ever come here and acted as you have. Tell me what you wish, and your wish shall be granted, for my heart is filled with pity for you."

Marouf answered, "Who and what are you?" and the *djinn* replied, "I am the spirit inhabiting this ruin." Then Marouf told him his troubles, and the *djinn*

asked, "Shall I carry you to a land where you can begin life anew?" And when Marouf replied, "Yes," the *djinn* at once took him on his back, and flew with him from sunset to sunrise, when he deposited him on a high hill.

"If you descend this hill," said he, "you will find yourself at the gates of the city of Khaïtan-el-Khotan, and there you may have better luck cobbling than in Cairo." Thereupon he disappeared, leaving Marouf standing there, his mouth wide open with astonishment, while the dawn began to break. So Marouf climbed down the hill, and there he saw a city with lofty walls, and palaces and rooftops gleaming with gold, fit to delight any heart. But when he entered the city gate and wandered through the bazaars, the townsfolk gaped at him with amazement, and some of them asked him whether he were a stranger. "Yes," answered Marouf, "and I come from Cairo, the city of happiness." "And when did you leave Cairo?" continued his questioner. "No longer ago than yesterday, at the time of the afternoon prayer," answered Marouf. Then the other laughed and called his friends, and told them to look at the man who had come from Cairo the day before. And they all cried, "How could you have left Cairo at the time of afternoon prayer, yesterday, when it takes a whole year to journey from Cairo to this city?"

While Marouf was still insisting that he had told the

truth, a merchant rode up on a mule, followed by two slaves, who made a way for him through the crowd. The merchant called out to the people, "Are you not ashamed of crowding about this stranger and making fun of him?" And to Marouf he said, "Come with me, brother, these shameless people shall not molest you!" He led him to a large mansion, and bade him seat himself in a splendidly decorated reception room. Then he gave an order to his slaves, who opened a chest and offered Marouf a robe suited to a merchant who had made a fortune. And when Marouf, who was well-built, had donned it, he really looked like a person of distinction. Then the merchant commanded that a meal be served, and after they had eaten it at a table loaded with the most appetizing dishes of every kind, he asked the name of his guest. "My name is Marouf and I am a cobbler by trade," said the latter. Other questions followed:

"Whence do you come?"

"From Cairo."

"And from what quarter of the town?"

"From the Red Street."

"And whom do you know in the Red Street? Do you know Sheik Ahmed the Druggist?"

"Sheik Ahmed was my next-door neighbor. He is well and happy."

And Marouf told the merchant that Ali, Sheik Ahmed's son, had been his own playmate before he



“ . . . and there he saw a city with lofty walls,
and palaces and roof-tops gleaming with gold.”

had run away from Cairo. Then the merchant cried,

“Allah bless you for good tidings! I am that Ali, Sheik Ahmed’s son, with whom you played and you, Oh, Marouf, are my friend!”

And Marouf told him his troubles and his adventure with the *djinn*, and Ali in turn explained how he had come to this distant city, and had thriven and prospered. Finally, when Marouf asked him what he was to do, Ali replied, “To-morrow, Allah willing, I shall give you a thousand *dinars* of gold and a mule, together with a slave to clear your way as you ride to the gate of the merchants’ bazaar. Go among the merchants, and when I see you I will rise, kiss your hand, and show you much attention. And whenever I ask you, ‘Have you brought a large quantity of such and such goods?’ then answer, ‘A great deal.’ And in truth the goods you bring are a will to work and intelligence. Then when they question me regarding you, I shall praise you to them and say, ‘Let him have a storehouse and a shop.’ I will assure them you are a rich and generous man; and whenever a beggar comes to you, give him a trifle, so that they will believe my words and be convinced of your wealth and liberality, and respect you. Then invite all the other merchants to a banquet, so that they may become better acquainted with you; buy and sell in the bazaar, and in a short time you will have become a rich man.”

The following morning Ali gave Marouf a thousand

dinars of gold, a handsome robe, a mule, and a slave to go before him, and said: "Allah release you from all debt, for you are my friend, and it is my duty to treat you in an open-hearted manner! Forget your griefs, and begin life here anew." To which Marouf answered, "May Allah reward you!" mounted the mule and rode to the bazaar.

When Ali the merchant saw him draw near he leaped up and flung himself upon him, crying, "O, blessed day! It is Marouf the merchant, a man of good works!" He kissed his hand and continued to the other merchants, "Brethren, Marouf the merchant favors us with his company!" Then all greeted him, Ali encouraging them, so that Marouf became more important in their eyes. And, after Marouf had dismounted, when one or the other questioned Ali, the latter said, "Yes, so far as wealth is concerned, he is one of the greatest merchants to be found anywhere. The fortune gathered by his father and his ancestors is famous in Cairo. He is a partner in great ventures in El-Hind, the land of the Ganges, and in El-Sind, the land of the lower Indus, as well as in Yemen, and is famed for his generosity. It would be well to do homage to his standing and position, for he has only come to our city to see the land and the people, since it is not necessary for him to travel for gain. He owns property which no fire can destroy, and I am his servant."

Thus he praised Marouf until all were buzzing his praises into each other's ears, crowding about him, and offering him sherbets and sweetmeats. When the *shahbender*, the head of the bazaar, came to greet him, Ali asked, so that the other merchants could hear him, "Did you, perhaps, O lord, bring with you such and such goods?" (Ali had already showed him various costly stuffs and taught him their names), and Marouf answered, "A great quantity." When another merchant asked him, "And have you brought some yellow cloth?" he replied, "A great quantity!" "And cloth of gazelle-blood red?" "A great quantity!" Then one merchant said to Ali, "If your countryman wished to send out a thousand loads of valuable stuffs, he could easily do so," and Ali answered, "He could make up the loads from a single one of his warehouses and never miss them."

Then, while they were seated in the bazaar, a beggar came and made the round of the merchants, and one among them gave him a small piece of silver and another a copper coin, and the majority nothing at all. But when he came to Marouf the latter gave him a handful of gold, and the beggar blessed him and went. The merchants were astonished and said, "That was a royal gift. He gave the beggar gold without counting. Were he not a very rich man he would not have given the beggar a handful of gold." After a time there came a poor woman, to whom he also gave a handful

of gold. She left him murmuring blessings, and soon told the other beggars, all of whom now came running to him one after another, while he continued to deal out handfuls of gold to them until his thousand *dinars* were gone. Then he struck his hands together and cried, "Allah is my sufficiency, and he is an excellent steward!" The *shahbender* asked, "What is amiss, merchant Marouf?" And Marouf answered, "It seems to me that most of the people of this city are beggars and poor. Had I known this in advance, I could have brought some money with me in my traveling bag, and have given it to them. I fear I shall remain away from home a long time, and it is not in my nature to refuse any beggar. Now my gold is gone and, if a beggar appeals to me, what shall I say to him?"

The *shahbender* replied, "Tell him that Allah will provide his daily bread." But Marouf shook his head. "Such is not my custom, it would annoy me, and I should like to have a thousand *dinars* which I can distribute as alms until my baggage arrives." So the *shahbender* told him not to be troubled, had a servant fetch him a thousand *dinars*, and Marouf handed them out to every beggar who passed until the hour of mid-day prayer had come. Then he stepped into the principal mosque with the other merchants, and after he had said his prayers, scattered what was left of the thousand *dinars* over the heads of those praying, so

that the people noticed him and blessed him, while the merchants were astounded at his nobility and generosity. Thereupon he turned to another merchant, and borrowed another thousand *dinars* from him for distribution, while his friend Ali watched him without daring to say a word. In this manner Marouf continued until the hour of afternoon prayer, when he went to the mosque and distributed the remainder of the money. And when the gates of the bazaar were closed, Marouf had borrowed and given away five thousand *dinars* of gold, telling everyone from whom he had borrowed, "When my caravan arrives, you shall have gold or goods, as best pleases you, for I have a great quantity with me."

In the evening he invited the Ali and the other merchants to a banquet, made Ali occupy the place of honor, and talked of nothing but jewels and costly stuffs. Whenever any rich fabrics were mentioned, he would say, "I have a great quantity of them." The next day he went back to the bazaar, and again borrowed money which he distributed to the poor. After he had carried on in this way for some twenty days, however, and had borrowed sixty thousand *dinars* from the merchants without his caravan or anything else arriving, his creditors began to ask for their money. They said, "The merchant Marouf's caravan does not seem to arrive. How long will he go on borrowing money from us to give to the poor?" One of them

suggested that they speak to Marouf's countryman Ali about it. So they went to the latter and said, "Ali, your friend Marouf's caravan does not arrive." Ali replied, "Have patience, it is sure to come soon." But he took Marouf aside and said to him, "Marouf, what does this mean? Did I tell you to bake your bread or to burn it? Here are the merchants crying for their money, and telling me that you owe them sixty thousand *dinars*, which you have taken from them and distributed among the poor. How can you pay these people, since you neither buy nor sell?"

Marouf answered, "Why, what is the matter? What are sixty thousand *dinars*? When my caravan arrives I will give it back to them, in stuffs or in gold or in silver, as they may choose." Then Ali cried, "Allah is great! But have you any stuffs?" And Marouf answered, "A great quantity of them." Then Ali said to him, "May Allah and his saints punish your impudence! Did I teach you these words to be used against me? I will tell the people what you really are."

But Marouf was ready with an answer, "Away with you and do not chatter so! Do you think I am a beggar? You think my words are false! But I have prayed to Allah to give me this caravan, and I am sure he will answer my prayer. He will not see me shamed. I shall have a great quantity of stuffs in my caravan, and when it arrives, all shall have double

the value of their money in goods. I do not need them." These words enraged Ali and he replied, "You ill-nurtured being, I will show you what it means to persist in such shameless falsehoods." But all Marouf said was, "Do what you will, so far as you are concerned. As for them, let them wait until my caravan comes, and then they shall have their money and more to boot."

Thereupon Ali left him and went away, saying to himself, "First I praised him, and if I now censure him I will seem to have told a falsehood. I will prove the truth of the proverb which says 'Who first praises and then censures is a two-fold falsifier.'" And he did not know what to do. When the merchants came to him and asked him whether he had spoken to Marouf, he replied, "Dear friends, I am ashamed to speak to him about the matter, since he also owes me a thousand *dinars*. When you loaned him the money you did not ask my advice, so you cannot look to me for anything. Ask him for your money yourselves, and if he does not give it to you, then complain to the sultan, and say, 'He is a swindler, who has tricked us.' And the sultan will do justice."

So the merchants went to the Sultan of Khaïtan, saying, "O lord of the ages, we do not know what to do with regard to this merchant, who is of unexampled generosity. He does thus and so, and all that he borrows he distributes with full hands among the beggars.

Were he a needy man he would not fling away his gold to the beggars by the fistful; yet if he be rich, the truth of his assertions would have been proven by the arrival of his caravan. We see no caravan arrive, however, though he claims that it exists, and started out before him. Whenever we mention some kind of stuff he says, 'I have a great quantity of it,' yet a long time has passed without our seeing a sign of his caravan, and he owes us sixty thousand *dinars*, all of which he has distributed among the beggars of Khaïtan." Then they praised Marouf and lauded his generosity.

The sultan, however, was very avaricious, even more avaricious than Aschab, the slave of the Caliph Othman whose name is a symbol of stinginess. When he heard tales of Marouf's nobility and generosity his greed got the better of him, and he said to his vizier, "If this merchant did not possess a great deal of money he would not be so generous. His caravan is sure to arrive, and then the merchants will crowd around him, and he will shower them with gold. I have a better claim to this money than they have. I will become his friend, and show him favor, and when his caravan comes I will take from him what the merchants otherwise would get. Then I shall marry him to my daughter and add his money to my money." The vizier replied, "O lord of the ages, I think that he is a swindler, and the swindler lays waste the house of the avaricious."

Said the sultan, "O vizier, I shall put him to the test, to discover whether he be a swindler or whether he speak the truth, whether he grew up in wealth or in poverty." "And how will you prove him?" asked the vizier. The sultan replied, "I have a jewel which I shall offer him. If he is able to estimate its value, then he is a man of means, but if not then he is a deceiver and a charlatan, and I shall have him duly executed."

So the sultan had Marouf sent for, seated him beside him, and said, "Marouf, the merchants of Khaïtan declare that you owe them sixty thousand *dinars*. Is this true?" And Marouf replied, "Yes, indeed!" Then the sultan asked, "Why do you not give them their money?" To which Marouf answered, "They must have patience until my caravan arrives, then I will give them double what I owe. If they wish gold they shall have gold; if they wish silver, they shall have silver; if they wish stuffs, they shall have stuffs. The man whom I owe a thousand shall receive two thousand from me, for saving my face in the presence of the poor, for I have a great quantity of everything."

Then the sultan said, "Merchant, take this stone and tell me its kind and value," and he gave him a jewel the size of a hazel-nut, for which he had paid a thousand *dinars*. The sultan valued it highly, for he had none other like it. But Marouf took it in his hand and crushed it, pressing it between his thumb and index

finger, for it was thin and could not bear pressure. When the sultan asked him why he had crushed the jewel, he laughed and answered, "O lord of the ages, that was no jewel! That was only a bit of stone valued at a thousand *dinars*. How can you call that a jewel? The price of a jewel is seventy thousand *dinars*, and what you gave me can only be called a bit of stone. A jewel smaller than a walnut has no value in my eyes, and I do not bother with it. How can you, who are Sultan of Khaïtan, call this bit of stone valued at a thousand *dinars* a jewel? However, you are excusable, for you are poor and your treasures have no value."

Then the sultan inquired, "O merchant, have you jewels of the kind you mention?" Marouf answered, "A great quantity!" Greed took possession of the sultan and he said, "Will you give me some of these true jewels?" And Marouf said, "When my caravan arrives, I will give you a great quantity of them. All you may care to ask for I have in quantity, and will give you for nothing." Then the sultan was happy and said to the merchants, "Go your way and wait until his caravan arrives; then come to me and I will give you your money."

"Be attentive to this Marouf," the sultan told his vizier, "talk to him about this and that, and speak of my daughter, the Princess Saamcheddine, so that he will marry her, and we can gather in his treasures." The vizier replied, "O lord of the ages, this man's

manner does not please me! I think he is a swindler and falsifier. Forget your words, lest you lose your fair daughter for naught and less than naught." Now the vizier himself had already urged the sultan to allow him to marry his daughter, and the sultan had been willing, but the maiden had refused to wed him. In speaking ill of Marouf he was serving his own selfish ends. So the sultan replied, "You traitor! You wish me no good, for you yourself wanted to marry my daughter, and she refused you. Now you try to prevent her from marrying to advantage for your own ends. The whole matter is no concern of yours. How can Marouf be a swindler when he told me the exact price of the jewel, and crushed it because it did not please him? He has jewels in quantity, and when he sees how charming my daughter is, he will lose his heart to her, and give her gems and other valuables. And you wish to rob my daughter and myself of these riches!" Then the vizier said no more, for he feared the sultan's rage, and thought to himself, "Once set the dogs on the cattle, and you will not be able to make them give over." He went to Marouf and said to him, "His majesty the sultan is fond of you, and he has a charming daughter whom he would like to have marry you. What do you say?"

Marouf replied, "It can do no harm, but he will have to wait until my caravan arrives, for the wedding gift befitting a princess must be a great one, in keeping

with her rank. I have no money about me at present, so the sultan must have patience until my caravan comes, for I have belongings in quantity, and under any circumstances, wish to make her a present of five thousand bags of gold. Besides that, I need a thousand bags to distribute among the poor on my wedding night; a thousand bags for those who take part in the procession; and a thousand bags for the soldiers and their banquet. In addition I still need a hundred jewels to present to the princess on her wedding morning, and a hundred jewels to distribute among her slaves and eunuchs, for each must have a jewel in honor of the bride's rank. Finally, I still lack money with which to clothe a thousand naked beggars, and other alms also will have to be distributed. This, however, I can do when my caravan arrives, for all these expenses are a matter of indifference to me." And such was his faith in Allah and in the prayer he had made, that Marouf believed every word he said.

The vizier left him and reported to the sultan, who said: "If such be Marouf's intentions, how can you call him a swindler and a falsifier?" Said the vizier, "I am of the same opinion still," for he had not given up the idea of marrying the princess himself. Then the sultan threatened him and cried, "By the life of my head, if you do not take back your words, you shall rue it! Return to Marouf and bring him to me, and I will settle the matter myself." So the vizier gave

Marouf the sultan's message, and bade him speak to the sultan himself. When Marouf came into the royal presence the sultan said, "Do not worry about your wedding expenses. My treasury is full, and here is the key. Take what you need, give away what you wish, clothe the poor, and do whatever you please without thinking of my daughter or her slaves. When your caravan arrives then you may give her whatever you wish. As to her wedding gift, we will wait in patience until your caravan comes. There shall not be the slightest difference between us."

Thereupon the sultan bade the Sheikh-ul-Islam write out the marriage contract between his daughter and the merchant Marouf, the wedding was announced, and the city festively decorated in honor of the event. They beat the tambourines, food of every kind was passed around, and the jugglers and mountebanks appeared. The merchant Marouf sat on a throne in one of the palace halls, and the buffoons, the jugglers, the *dschink*—the Turkish lads disguised as girls who dance at public festivities—and the conjurers came to him in crowds, while he cried to the treasurer, "Give me gold and give me silver!"

Then he made the rounds of the player-folk and their audience, and to each of them he gave a handful of gold, distributed presents to the poor and needy who watched them perform, and clothed the naked. It was a loud and joyous festival, and the treasurer found it

hard to bring money from the treasury quickly enough for Marouf's purposes. On the other hand, the vizier's heart nearly burst with rage at the sight, and the merchant Ali, surprised at Marouf's lavish generosity, said to him, "May Allah and his saints protect your scalplock! Are you not satisfied with throwing away the merchants' money without wasting the sultan's treasures?" But Marouf replied, "That is none of your business. When my caravan arrives I will make everything up to the sultan many times over." And he went on flinging away money, saying to himself, "What are the odds! What is destined to happen will happen, Allah will not forget me, and at any rate, no one can escape his fate!"

After the festivities had lasted forty days, the wedding procession was formed, preceded by the *emirs* and all the soldiery. And when they had thus inaugurated the processional, Marouf flung gold over the heads of the people, and they followed the splendid cortège in crowds. Then, after the *emirs* had led him into the palace where the Princess Saamcheddine sat, they went out, letting the hangings drop behind them. There Marouf sat him down on a high divan covered with rugs, clasped his hands together sadly and cried, "There is no power and no strength save in Allah, the lofty and elevate!" The Princess Saamcheddine, surprised, said, "My lord, may good fortune be yours! Why are you so sad?" And he answered, "Why should

I not be sad, when what your father has done to me is like the burning-up of the first green growth of the grain!" Then the princess inquired, "And what has my father done? Tell me." Said Marouf, "He brought us together before my caravan arrived, and I had meant to distribute a hundred jewels among your slaves, to do you honor. I have no need to be saving with jewels, seeing that I have a great quantity of them." But the princess told him not to worry about it; it would be time enough to distribute jewels when his caravan arrived.

The next day Marouf sat beside the sultan as he held his *divan* and called the treasurer to him. And when the treasurer came he bade him bring from the treasury a rich robe of honor for every *emir* and dignitary, including himself. Then when all were attired in their robes of honor, Marouf gave them other gifts in keeping with their rank. Thus twenty days went by, and still Marouf's caravan did not arrive. At the end of that time the treasurer came to the sultan in Marouf's absence, and said to him, "O lord of the ages, your treasury is nearly empty, and we will have to close it entirely in a few days' time because it will be altogether empty!" The sultan turned to his vizier: "O vizier, my son-in-law's caravan does not arrive, and he gives us no news of it." Then the vizier laughed and answered, "O lord of the ages, may Allah have mercy upon you! This deceiver has neither caravan nor any-

thing else. He has flung away your money, and you have married him to your daughter without any prospect of getting it back. How long will you continue letting him have his way?" Said the sultan, "Tell me how we are to find out the truth?"

"Ask the Princess Saamcheddine to wheedle it out of him," replied the jealous vizier. So the king bade his daughter come to him, and when he had explained his troubles she promised to find out how matters really stood with Marouf, her husband.

That evening she said to him, "Tell me, how long will you continue to declare that you are a wealthy merchant and the master of great riches? All you say is 'My caravan, my caravan!' Yet your caravan never puts in an appearance. If there is no truth in your words, tell me so, and I will plan a way for you to escape from your difficulties."

So Marouf told her that at home, in Cairo, he had been no more than a cobbler, a cobbler who could not even make a living. He told her his whole history. "Yet, as to the caravan," he added, "Allah will make good my words. I prayed him to give it to me, and I feel he will answer my prayer. Even now I have faith that my caravan will arrive in time to show I spoke the truth." When she heard it, the Princess Saamcheddine laughed happily and said, "I am glad you are not an out and out falsifier and deceiver, for such a man I could not love! Besides, it was owing

to my father's greed that he made you his son-in-law. The vizier hates you, and if my father finds out that you have deceived him, even without intention, he will have you executed and that would reflect discredit on me. The best thing for you to do is to put on this mameluke's dress, take these fifty thousand *dinars* of my money, mount a blooded steed from the sultan's stables and ride off to some country where my father's power cannot touch you. Settle there as a merchant, send me a letter by a courier, and I will despatch whatever money I can lay hand on to you. Thus your riches will increase, and when my father dies I will send for you and you shall return to Khaïtan with honor. And now make haste, and be on your way before dawn." So Marouf promised to obey his wife, dressed himself as a mameluke and ordered a groom to bring him a blooded steed. This he mounted and rode out of the city while it was still dark, and all who saw him thought him one of the sultan's mamelukes, riding on an errand.

In the morning the Princess Saamcheddine went to her father and said, "May Allah blacken the face of the vizier who has tried to blacken that of my husband! Even before I could question Marouf, my husband, about his baggage, the eunuch Faradsh came into the room with a letter. 'Ten mamelukes have reined their steeds beneath the palace windows, and they gave me this letter,' he cried. They said, 'We kiss the hands of

the merchant Marouf, our master, to whom we beg you to deliver this letter! Having heard that he had married the sultan's daughter, we came at once to inform him of our adventures.' So I took the letter from Faradsh and read, 'From his five hundred mamelukes to their highly-born lord, the merchant Marouf: We herewith inform you that after you left us our caravan was attacked by the Arabs, with whom we fought. The Arabs were two thousand in number; we were but five hundred mamelukes, and a fierce battle took place between us. They tried to cut us off, and we were obliged to fight against them for thirty days. This is the reason for our delay in arriving. As it is, the Arabs have captured two hundred bales of goods from us, and slain fifty mamelukes.' When my husband Marouf read this he cried, 'May Allah shame them! Why did they fight the Arabs for the two hundred bales? What are two hundred bales? They should not have lost time on their account, for two hundred bales are worth no more than seven thousand *dinars*! I shall have to ride out to them and hurry them along. What the Arabs have taken will never be missed from the caravan, and it makes no difference whatsoever, for I regard these bales as an alms bestowed on them.' Then he left me, laughing, giving not a thought to the loss of his goods. He rode off with the mamelukes and—Allah be praised!—I did not put the questions you bade me ask, for I am sure he

would have regarded me with eyes of deprecation, and have despised me. And all this is the fault of your vizier, who has made unseemly remarks about my husband!" For by now the princess herself half-believed in Marouf's caravan and thought, "If Allah can make the caravan true why not my own words?"

Then the sultan said, "In truth, my daughter, your husband has so much money that money means nothing to him. Since the day when he came to this country he has given alms to the poor, and, Allah willing, his caravan will arrive shortly, and he will shower us with riches." Thus he praised his daughter, deceived by her cunning, and scolded his vizier.

In the meantime the merchant Marouf had ridden into the desert, not knowing into which land he had best pass, bewailing his separation from his wife, weeping bitterly and deploring his fate in verses, for the way lay dark before him, and death seemed better to him than life unless Allah hastened to answer his prayer. And thus he rode on like a man overcome, until at noon he reached a small village, near which he saw a *fellah* ploughing with two steers. Tormented by hunger, he rode up to the *fellah* and said, "Peace be with you!" And the *fellah* returned his *salaam* and answered, "Welcome, my lord, and are you one of the sultan's mamelukes?" Marouf replied, "I am." Then the *fellah* invited him to eat with him. Marouf, who saw that the *fellah* was kind-hearted and liberal,

said to him, "My brother, I see nothing to eat, so how can I eat with you?" To this the *fellah* replied, "Dismount, sir, the village is near and I will go and fetch the midday meal for you, and fodder for your horse." Marouf replied, "If the village is near, I can get there more quickly than yourself and buy what I need to eat at the bazaar." But the *fellah* shook his head. "My lord," said he, "it is but a small village, it has no bazaar, and there is no buying nor selling in it. By Allah, be my guest and delight my heart, while I go and return quickly!"

So Marouf dismounted, and the *fellah* left him and went to the village to fetch the midday meal. Marouf had seated himself on the ground to wait, but soon said to himself, "I have kept this poor fellow from his work, and I will rise and plough for him until he return, in order to make up for having sent him away." So he laid hand on the plough and began to drive a furrow, goading on the steers when, suddenly, the ploughshare struck something and the beasts stopped. He urged them on, but as they could make no headway, he examined the ploughshare and saw that it had caught in a ring of gold.

Marouf freed the ring of earth, and found it was attached to the middle of a block of marble the size of a nether millstone. He began to tug at the ring and kept on tugging until he at length succeeded in lifting the stone from its place, disclosing an opening with a

flight of steps leading down to a subterranean chamber.

Marouf then descended the steps, and found himself in a great hall resembling a bath with its four *liwans*, great oblong marble basins, the first filled from floor to ceiling with gold; the second full of emeralds, pearls and coral; the third of hyacinths, balas rubies and turquoises; and the fourth full of diamonds, and all kinds of other costly jewels; while in the rear of the chamber stood a chest of purest crystal, full of priceless gems, each of them the size of a walnut. On this crystal chest, moreover, stood a small golden casket, no larger than a lemon.

When Marouf saw this he was surprised, and full of joy, asked himself, "Now what does that little golden casket contain?" He opened it and found a golden seal-ring lying within, on which were graven names and talismans, in letters which looked like the tracks made by ants. Then he rubbed the ring and behold, a voice cried, "At your service! At your service, my lord! Wish and your wish shall be granted! Do you desire to populate a desert or devastate a city, slay a king, dig a river or anything else? Whatever you wish shall be done, with the permission of Allah, the King of Kings, the Creator of Day and Night!"

Then Marouf asked, "O thou creature of Allah, what and who are you?"

The *djinn* answered, "I am the slave of this ring, and am at the service of whoever possesses it. Whatever

his wish may be, that wish I fulfill, and nothing can excuse my neglect of his commands. I am the sultan of the *auns* of the *djinni*, and my host comprises two-and-seventy tribes, each of them with two-and-seventy thousand members. Each of these thousands is the ruler over a thousand *marids*, each *marid* of a thousand *auns*, each *aun* of a thousand demons, and each demon of a thousand *djinns*. All of them are obedient to my command, and would not dare disobey me. Yet I am bound by the magic power of this ring, and must carry out the commands of its possessor. You own it now, and I have become your servant. Ask what you will and I will obey your order whenever you call upon me, on land or at sea. Merely rub the ring, and I will appear on the spot. Yet be careful not to rub the ring twice in succession, since then the fire of the names which are engraved on it would reduce me to ashes, and you would regret it. Now you know all there is to know, and may peace be with you!"

"What is your name?" Marouf asked him, and the *djinn* answered, "I am called Abu-Saadat, the Father of Joys." "Then tell me, Abu-Saadat, what is this place, and whose magic power bound you to the ring in this casket?"

"This place, O lord, is the place of the buried treasure of Ahaddad, the son of Ad, who built Irem, the city of pillars, a city such as the world has never yet seen. I was his servant during his lifetime, and this ring he laid

away with his other treasures. Now it has fallen into your hands." Then Marouf inquired, "Could you bring everything there is in this buried treasure chamber to the surface of the earth?" And Abu-Saadat answered, "That is the easiest thing to do in the world." So Marouf bade him bring the contents of the treasure cave to the surface. Abu-Saadat waved his hand, and the earth split. He descended into the fissure, and in a short time a number of sturdy boys with handsome faces began to come out of the rift in the ground, carrying baskets filled with gold. After they had emptied them on the ground, they went back and returned with others; and thus working without pause they were able to say, before another hour had passed, "There is nothing left in the treasure chamber."

Now Abu-Saadat reappeared and said to Marouf, "As you see, lord, we have brought out all that the treasure chamber held." And Marouf asked, "Who are these boys?" "Those are my sons," replied the *djinn*. "It was not necessary to gather the *auns* for this little matter, and so my sons have attended to it, deeming themselves honored at being of service to you. Now what more do you wish?"

Marouf reflected a moment, then asked, "Can you procure mules and chests for me, pack the treasure in the chests and load them on the mules?" "Nothing easier," said the *djinn*. He uttered a great cry, whereupon all his sons—there were some eight hundred of

them—appeared, and he said to them: “Some of you turn yourselves into mules, and others into handsome mamelukes, the least mong them more splendid than any found in a king’s court! Again others among you must turn yourselves into muleteers and servants!” And after they had done so he called upon the *auns*, and ordered part of them to assume the shape of horses, with golden saddles adorned with gems. When Marouf saw this he asked, “But where are the chests?” So the chests were brought to him, and he ordered the gold and the jewels to be packed separately, each according to its kind. When this was done the chests were loaded on the three hundred mules, and Marouf asked, “O Abu-Saadat, is it possible for you to procure bales of costly fabrics for me?” Said the *djinn*, “Do you wish Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, Indian or Greek stuffs?”

“Bring me a hundred loads of the stuffs of every land, on a hundred mules,” Marouf answered.

To this Abu-Saadat replied, “Grant me a little time, O lord, so that I may give my *auns* directions, and order each troop to go to a certain land, and return with a hundred loads in the shape of mules.”

“How long a time will you need?” questioned Marouf.

“No more than the dark of a single night,” replied the *djinn*. “Before daybreak all you wish shall be here.”

So Marouf said, "The time you ask is granted you, and command the *djinn* to set up a tent." When this had been done he seated himself beneath it, and a table with food was carried in to him, while Abu-Saadat told him, "O lord, remain seated in your tent, and my sons will watch over you so that you have nothing to fear. I must now go and gather my *auns* and send them off to carry out your wishes."

Thereupon the *djinn* disappeared, and Marouf remained seated at the table beneath his tent, surrounded by the sons of Abu-Saadat in the shape of mamelukes, eunuchs and servants. Suddenly the *fellah* made his appearance with a great dish of lentils, and a nosebag full of grain. When he saw the tent which had been set up, and the mamelukes standing before it with their hands crossed upon their breasts, he thought that the sultan himself had come and encamped on the spot. He stood there quite dumbfounded, and thought, "What a pity I did not kill two pullets and roast them for the sultan in butter!" He was about to turn around in order to offer them to the sultan, when Marouf saw him, and called to him, at the same time ordering his mamelukes to bring him into the tent. So they dragged him into Marouf's presence, together with his bowl of lentils, and Marouf asked him what they were.

Said the *fellah*, "That is your dinner, and the grain for your steed. Forgive me, but I never believed the sultan would come this way. Had I known it, I should

have killed two pullets for him, and entertained him in a fitting manner." But Marouf assured him the sultan had not come. "I am his son-in-law, however," said he, "and he took advantage of me. But now he has sent his mamelukes after me, to make up our differences, and I am returning to Khaïtan. Since you have offered me hospitality without knowing me, I will accept it, for all that you have are nothing but lentils, and I will eat no other dish." He ordered the bowl to be set in the middle of the table, and ate lentils until his hunger was satisfied, while the *fellah* filled himself with the most delicious dishes.

Then Marouf washed his hands, and gave the mamelukes permission to eat; and they flung themselves upon what remained of the meal and devoured it. When the *fellah's* bowl was emptied Marouf filled it with gold, and said to him, "Take it to your house, and then come to me in Khaïtan, where I will honor you." And the *fellah*, driving his steers before him, took the bowl full of gold to his native village, almost convinced he was the sultan's son-in-law himself. Marouf, however, spent the night in joy and festivity, for the maidens of the *horte*, the *djinn* maidens who guard the buried treasures of earth, came and played their instruments of music and danced for him, so that it was a night wonderful beyond all that a mortal might expect.

The following morning, when dawn was breaking, a great cloud of dust arose, and when it divided mules

with their loads appeared, seven hundred of them, surrounded by muleteers, batsmen and torch-bearers, Abu-Saadat himself rode at the head of the caravan on a white mule as the leader, and before him was carried a litter with four uprights of ruddy gold, adorned with precious stones. When he reached the tent he dismounted, and after he had kissed the earth at Marouf's feet, said, "My lord, your orders have been carried out in full, and in the litter is a magnificent robe of honor, such as no king can boast! Put it on, seat yourself in the litter, and give us your further commands!" For a moment Marouf was speechless. Here, at last was the caravan for which he had so often prayed. His faith had been justified, his prayer had been granted, his words had been made true. He cast himself on the ground and thanked Allah for his goodness and mercy.

Then Marouf said to the *djinn*, "Abu-Saadat, I shall now write a letter, which you must take to my uncle, the Sultan of Khaïtan-el-Khotan." "I hear and I obey," replied Abu-Saadat. So Marouf wrote the letter and sealed it, and Abu-Saadat carried it to the sultan. The latter was talking to his vizier: "My heart is grieved for my son-in-law," said he, "and I fear he has been slain by the Arabs. If only I knew which way he had gone, I would follow him with my soldiers. Alas, why did he not tell me he was going!"

The vizier replied, "Allah be merciful to you in view of your blind confidence! By the life of my

soul, the fellow had begun to notice that we mistrusted him, and has disappeared because he was afraid of being found out. He was nothing but a cheat and falsifier."

At that moment Abu-Saadat entered in the guise of a courier, and kissed the ground at the sultan's feet, wishing him long life, fame and fortune through eternal years. Said the sultan, "Who are you and what is your wish?" Abu-Saadat replied, "I am a courier sent on in advance with a letter, by your son-in-law, who is following with his caravan. Here it is." The sultan took it and read: "I prostrate myself at the feet of my uncle, the mighty Sultan of Khaïtan. I have arrived with the caravan, therefore pray send soldiers to meet me." The sultan turned to the vizier: "May Allah blacken your face, O vizier!" he cried. "How often do you intend to attack my son-in-law's honor, and call him a fraud and a cheat? Now he has arrived with the caravan and you are no more than a traitor."

The vizier hung his head in shame and answered, "O king of the ages, I only spoke as I did because the caravan did not appear, and I feared the moneys you had spent would be lost!" To which the sultan returned, "Of what account are the moneys? Now that his caravan has arrived, he will return me double the amount." Then the sultan commanded that the city be splendidly decorated, and going to his daughter said to her: "I have good news. Your husband will arrive

shortly with his caravan, so he tells me in this letter, and I am going out to meet him." The Princess Saamcheddine was much surprised, and thought to herself, "How very strange! And yet, nothing is beyond Allah's power to do. He has granted my husband's prayer. The Prophet be praised, I did not fail in my duty to Marouf, at all events!"

When Ali, the Egyptian merchant, saw that the city was hung and garlanded in festival array, he asked the reason and was told, "The caravan of Marouf, the sultan's son-in-law, has arrived!" And he cried out "Allah is great! What can it mean? He came to me as a beggar, where could he have found a caravan? Perhaps it is a trick on the part of the princess, to save him from shame. May Allah guard and protect him!" All the other merchants were happy, because now their money would be returned to them. While the sultan set forth with his soldiers Abu-Saadat hurried back to Marouf, and informed him that he had delivered the letter. And Marouf answered, "Then load the beasts."

The beasts were loaded and, putting on his gorgeous robe of honor, Marouf leaned back in the litter, looking a thousand times more powerful and majestic than the sultan himself. And when the caravan had covered half of the way to Khaïtan-el-Khotan, it met the sultan and his mamelukes. The sultan, when he caught sight of Marouf in his litter, rushed forward and greeted

him, as did all the dignitaries, and it was plain to all that Marouf had spoken the truth and nothing but the truth.

Magnificently escorted, Marouf reëntered the city, at the head of his caravan, with banners flying and drums and trumpets sounding. The merchants of Khaïtan, Ali at their head, hastened to kiss his feet and congratulate him. Marouf laughed, and entering the royal palace and seating himself on the throne he said: "Place the loads of gold in the treasury of the sultan, my uncle, and bring the loads of stuffs hither!" And when they had done so, he had the seven hundred bales unpacked before him. After he had made choice of the best and richest among the fabrics, he ordered them to be taken to the Princess Saamcheddine, together with a casket of jewels to be distributed among her slaves. Then he gave the merchants whom he owed rich stuffs, to the amount of two thousand *dinars* for every one thousand they had lent him, and made huge gifts to the poor, without the sultan daring to say a word, until all seven hundred loads had been given away.

And then he turned to the mamelukes and soldiers, and began to distribute jewels, among them emeralds, hyacinths, pearls, corals and other gems, giving them away by the fistful, without counting, so that the king finally said, "O my son, have you not given away enough? There are but few of your bales left." To which Marouf replied, "I have a great quantity."

And, since by his faith in Allah, he already had proved the truth of his words, none ventured to contradict him. Now the treasurer came back and cried, "O king of the ages, the treasury is full! Where am I to put the rest of the gold and jewels?" And the king directed that other rooms be used.

Then Marouf went to his wife, and she asked him whether he had wished to test her loyalty or had merely been playing a joke on her. And Marouf answered, "I wished to test you, and see whether you really cared for me, or whether you only cared for what earthly goods I might possess. I knew in my soul that Allah would send my caravan in his own good time. Now I know that your affection is real, and realize your worth." And the jewels and robes he gave her for herself and her household to show his gratitude were so splendid that the Princess Saamcheddine appeared among her slaves like the moon amid the stars.

Marouf had some further adventures with the magic ring of Shaddad, the son of Ad, but they are another story. Suffice to say, that ever after his baggage had arrived, Marouf, once the cobbler of Cairo, but now the Prince of Kḥāitan-el-Khotan, lived long and happily with the beautiful Princess Saamcheddine, honored by his father-in-law, beloved by the people, and adored by the soldiery. And whenever, in reply to a question, he said, "I have quantities of it!" no one doubted his

word, for had not his caravan arrived? As for the hateful vizier, he received the bastinado, and was exiled from the kingdom, and seeing that there was no one who regretted his going, his absence was not mourned.



THE EYES OF KANOULA

(A Hindoo Legend)

ONCE upon a time a powerful king named Asoka ruled in India. He was kind and charitable and built hospitals and planted gardens for man and beast. He had wells dug for the use of travellers and cattle, and planted fruit-trees and health-giving plants along the highways of his kingdom.

Now the king's oldest son had eyes as kind and beautiful as those of the Kanoula bird, which feeds on moonbeams, and so he was named Kanoula. Asoka had loved Padmavati, Kanoula's mother, greatly but she had passed to Indra's paradise while she was still young. Before she went she said to King Asoka:

"When I am gone, another queen will take my place, and it may be that you will think more of her children than of my son. Promise me that you will continue to watch over him and cherish him as a father should." And Asoka answered, "I promise you that Kanoula shall always be dear to me, and that he only shall succeed me in the kingdom." And when she heard these words Padmavati was content, and took her way to the glorious gardens of Indra untroubled.

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Kanoula was worthy of his father's confidence and affection. Kind, modest and gentle, every one became fond of him. In course of time he married a lovely maiden, Madhavi, whose only thought was to please him in all things.

Unfortunately, after Padmavati had gone, Asoka chose for his queen an ambitious woman named Siddhi. And Siddhi, when the gods gave her a son, wished with all her heart and soul that he might inherit Asoka's kingdom instead of Kanoula. Without showing it, she began to cherish a violent hatred for the prince. Now it happened that King Asoka fell ill, and Queen Siddhi was able to restore him to health by the use of magic powers—so it was said—of which she had the secret. And, as a reward for this service, she asked the king to make her little son the heir to the crown. Asoka was grieved to have to refuse her request, and told her that he was bound by his promise to Padmavati.

"I can give up my kingdom," said he, "but I cannot break my promise." So then Queen Siddhi demanded of him that he give over to her his kingly power for a single day, a day which she would fix herself. And this King Asoka consented to do. The day was to arrive all too soon when Siddhi would use the power promised her in a terrible way.

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There was a city in King Asoka's land called Taxi-cola, which had revolted against the king's officials.

Siddhi herself had been the secret cause of this revolt. First she had caused the king's officials to burden the city with excessive taxes; and then she had encouraged the citizens to rise against the royal tax-collectors. Finally the queen's agents persuaded the inhabitants of the city to send a deputation to King Asoka, to beg for the presence of his son Kanoula, that he might give them juster laws, and bring back peace to their town.

On the morning of the day when this deputation was expected to bow before King Asoka, Siddhi begged him to give her the ivory seal with which he sealed all his orders, as he had promised. This the king did, and thus Siddhi was invested with the royal power for the whole day, according to Asoka's promise.

And when the deputation from Taxicola had made its request, Siddhi replied that in fact only Prince Kanoula, whom the people worshipped, could bring back the city to obedience without violence. And when she said this King Asoka's mind was troubled, for he began to suspect some evil design on her part.

Would he not be exposing Kanoula to the greatest dangers by sending him to a city in revolt? When he expressed this fear, the queen, pretending to be deeply grieved, declared that since her husband seemed to distrust her, she would not say a word with regard to what should be done. Then, certain that Asoka would not take it back, she offered to return the royal seal. And Asoka, in fact, because he had given his word, allowed

Siddhi to keep the seal, and at Kanoula's own request, consented to let him go to Taxicola. But, at least, he wished an army to be assembled to accompany him. This the young prince did not wish. To avoid bloodshed in a city in revolt quick action should be taken, he said, and it costs time to gather an army.

"Besides," he added, "will the sight of a great multitude in arms, the neighing of horses, the cries of the elephants, the rumble of chariots, the sound of drums and trumpets incline the rebels to peace?"

Asoka said no more. Kanoula bade him farewell; took an affectionate leave of Madhavi, his young wife, consoling her as best he was able, and then, leaping on his steed Mandala, whose gallop was swifter than the course of the clouds in the sky, set out alone on his journey. Yet behind him, and without suspecting it, there galloped a horseman sent by Queen Siddhi, a man entirely devoted to her, who carried an order sealed with the royal seal. To the gallop of his white steed the young prince ate up the miles which lay between him and Taxicola. At either hand as he rode, the villages hidden among the *champak*-trees, the hills and streamlets, the fields of rice and the distant blue line of the forests swept by. Yet the news of his coming had gone before, and the inhabitants of the city, having decorated their houses with banners and garlands, advanced to meet him. Some flung flowers along the way, others carried vases full of offerings, and all made the air re-

sound with their acclamations. They begged the prince to hear their complaints, telling him that they had not revolted against the king, but against the unworthy officials who had plundered and insulted them. Kanoula, having listened to them with kindness, promised to treat them justly, and entered the city to the sound of musical instruments.

When the prince had lowered the taxes, and put in new officials to take the place of the old, the inhabitants of Taxicola sent messengers to King Asoka to assure him of their obedience, and to bless the prince who had brought them peace. The whole town was given over to rejoicing when, toward evening, the other horseman arrived, bearing a royal message, which he presented to the leading men of the city. They read it with horror, for the message, sealed with the royal seal, bade them put out the eyes of Kanoula, who was described as the king's worst enemy and the shame of his race. When the order was carried out, not a man in the town was to raise a finger to aid the prince, and it was forbidden to mention his name for all time.

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Not daring to inform Kanoula, whose virtues had won their hearts, of the inhuman command which they thought had been sent them by the king, the leading men of Taxicola passed a night of cruel anxiety. Finally, they said to each other, "What will become of us, if we do not obey? Is it likely that the man who

could show such hatred for his own son, against a prince whose sole desire is the good of all men, will spare us?"

The following morning they handed the royal letter to Kanoula who, having read it, said, "This message deserves to be obeyed, for it is sealed with the king's seal. Do what it bids you do."

The young prince did not for a moment believe that his father had given this cruel order to deprive him of his sight; but suspected that it came from the queen. Yet he felt that he ought to obey the king's command, even though the royal power had been given over to Siddhi for a day.

The order was to be carried out in the great square in the middle of the city, and the news soon spread among the people. The executioners were sent for and were commanded to deprive Kanoula of his eyes. Raising their hands as a sign of respect, however, they all cried:

"None of us would dare do this!"

The prince unrolled the turban, starred with the richest jewels, which covered his head, and offering it to the executioners said to them,

"Do your duty and this shall be yours!"

But still they refused. At last a deformed and disfigured wretch with a repulsive face came forward and offered to take the place of the executioners. He did not, however, dare strike out Kanoula's eyes. Instead, he lit a great fire in the square, and heated an iron red-

hot. Then, drawing near the prince, who remained as calm as a wave in the ocean depths, he passed it before Kanoula's eyes—and they became sightless—while the thousands who filled the square sobbed with emotion.

When the executioner had done his duty, Kanoula supported himself by laying one hand on his shoulder, while he raised the other as a sign that he wished to speak. A great silence fell, and the prince begged the people to withdraw, not to seek to aid him and never to speak his name, as King Asoka had commanded. Then all withdrew, weeping, and Kanoula, at the end of his strength, sank to the earth. Soon, however, goaded by the burning rays of the sun, he dragged himself along on hands and knees until he felt the cool freshness of shadow, and fell down in the shade of a clump of giant bamboos.

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For hours nothing stirred round about him. All was silence and solitude. Suddenly, however, he heard a nicker near his head, and realized that his steed Mandala had sought him out, and was neighing sorrowfully.

“You, too, Mandala, must abandon your master! Leave him, and go wherever your instinct may guide you!”

Then Mandala, after having circled around the prince several times, finally left him, and, avoiding Taxi-

cola, sad and alone, he galloped back along the road he had followed so joyfully the day before.

When the sun had set many of the inhabitants of the city, who, for all Kanoula had forbidden it, wished to help him, appeared in the grove where he lay. As silent as shadows, they looked at one another with suspicion, and did not dare go near the blind man. At last a poor old woman drew near, washed his wounds with fresh water and bandaged them with cooling herbs. Then, having gently induced him to rise, she led him beyond the gates, to the outskirts of the next village, and sighing, took the road back to the city alone.

In the meantime the messengers sent from Taxicola had been received by the king with much favor. They had reported with what demonstrations of affection Prince Kanoula had been received, and at the news Madhavi's heart had been comforted.

During the following days, while she awaited Kanoula's return with impatience, she went every morning to the clump of trees where they had said farewell. On the third morning, she suddenly saw a cloud of dust draw near, and out of it came Mandala, without a rider. A terrible thought flashed through poor Madhavi's mind, and like a young tree felled by the woodman she sank unconscious to the ground.

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When her senses returned Madhavi, in her grief, felt sure that Kanoula must have perished, a victim of the

revolt. Yet was there not some hope that he might have escaped with his life? Should she not set out at once to find him, and not rest until she was sure that he was indeed lost to her?

Without wasting a moment, she returned to the palace, took off her costly garments and jewels, and put on the simple dress of a laborer's wife. Then she hurried away, without taking leave of King Asoka, for she feared that his love for her might lead him to prevent her going.

Alone and on foot, she began the long and toilsome journey to Taxicola, asking everywhere along the road for news of Prince Kanoula. For many days she struggled on, without hearing any news of her husband.

One morning, after she had left a poor hut in which she had been hospitably received, she questioned a laborer who was sowing his field. This man told her that at daybreak, when going to his work, he had noticed in a little grove nearby, a blind young man, in princely dress, to whom he had given some wild fruits and a drink of fresh water.

Madhavi hurried to the little grove. When she saw Kanoula quite alone, sitting on a rock, his sorrowful face no longer radiant with the light of his beautiful eyes, she burst into tears, and knelt at his feet, incapable of saying a single word. And as she covered his hands with tears and kisses, Kanoula felt—for he could not see—the presence of Madhavi, and was moved to the

depth of his soul. It seemed almost too good to be true. Finally, when he spoke and she answered, he recognized his wife's sweet voice, and begged her to sit beside him. Both of them, in their misfortune, felt a profound joy at once more being together, and knowing how greatly they loved each other.

After Kanoula had told Madhavi all that had happened to him, they rose, and the young wife tenderly guiding the blind man's steps, set forth to present themselves before the king.

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When he was informed that the steed Mandala had returned without his master, and that Madhavi had disappeared, King Asoka was seized with the most cruel anxiety. He at once sent messengers to Taxicola to bring him news of the prince, and they were also commanded to look for Madhavi.

When the leading men of the city learned that the king was filled with anxiety with regard to his son, they realized that they had been tricked by the supposed royal message sent to them.

Fearing a terrible punishment, they concealed the truth from the king's messengers. The prince, so they said, had wished to return alone as he had come. The inhabitants who were questioned did not dare to tell of Kanoula's blinding, for all were weighed down with the horror of the crime which had been done. The messengers returned, suspecting something was wrong,

but without having been able to discover what had taken place. In vain they searched the countryside, and at last returned to their master without news of either Kanoula or Madhavi.

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Yet the blind prince, having exchanged his costly garments for a beggar's dress—robes glittering with gold and jewels were not in keeping with his unfortunate condition—was slowly making his way, together with his wife, toward the capital of the kingdom. When they passed through a village both sang with voices so pure and sweet that the inhabitants, moved to compassion, divided their food with them.

At length they reached the end of their journey, and tried to enter the presence of King Asoka. But they were stopped by the guards of the palace, who did not recognize them. Both Kanoula and Madhavi were poorly clad and covered with dust, night was falling, and Kanoula's face was no longer illumined by his wonderful eyes. Notwithstanding, the guards, pitying them, let them take refuge in the stable-room where the king's chariots were kept. There the travellers, worn out with fatigue, fell asleep.

The next morning, while the king was thinking sadly of his son, he heard a voice which made him tremble. It was Kanoula, singing in the stable where the chariots were kept. Asoka recognized his voice, yet feared he might be mistaken. Violently moved, he demanded to

know who was singing, and was told that it was a blind beggar, travelling with his wife. More and more troubled, King Asoka had them brought before him. For a moment he did not recognize his son in beggar's rags, but Kanoula's face, even though his eyes were sightless, had not lost that profound sweetness no other possessed. The father's heart was not to be deceived. Besides, though she was so simply dressed, the woman evidently was Madhavi. After having examined both, the king went to Kanoula, and trembling, drew him into his arms and embraced him.

After having given rein to his grief in sighs and tears, he questioned the prince and learned the reason of his misfortune. At once King Asoka fell into a violent rage.

"Who," cried he, "could have misused my royal seal to commit such a crime?"

Kanoula kept silence. He did not wish to accuse Queen Siddhi, but Madhavi reminded the king that Siddhi had had the royal seal in her possession for an entire day. Already King Asoka had been suspicious. Siddhi ardently wished her own son to succeed him on the throne. Might she not have had Kanoula blinded? The king had repulsed this horrible suspicion, but now he could no longer doubt that the queen was guilty. He sent for her at once.

Ever since her messenger had reported that her savage order had been carried out, Queen Siddhi had

passed sleepless nights. And when by chance she did fall asleep, it was only to behold, in hideous nightmares, visions of Kanoula's sufferings. Then she would awake, screaming, and thinking with terror that her crime might be discovered from day to day. She felt as though the glances of the king, of the court officials, of her servants, of the whole people, could read to the bottom of her heart.

When King Asoka's order reached her, she knew that her guilt had been discovered, and came into his presence like one who has been condemned. At the sight of the blind young prince she was filled with horror at what she had done. She wished to express her repentance, yet unable to speak, she flung herself down on her knees, and with bowed head awaited the king's sentence.

No confession could have been clearer. King Asoka, mad with rage, cried out that she should be tortured before being put to death. But Kanoula begged his father to be merciful. And when the king rejected his prayer Kanoula said to him:

"O my father! This woman before you is not the only guilty one. What has befallen me is the consequence of an act I committed in one of my previous existences on earth. For a long time I have tried to recall what I had done to merit my present misfortune. Last night, while I slept, it was revealed to me in a dream."

“What wrong action could you have committed, my son?” asked the king, “what could you have done, who are the best of men?”

“In days gone by,” replied Kanoula, “there was a huntsman who went into the mountains to chase savage beasts. One day he surprised a herd of fifty gazelles in a cavern, and captured them all by means of a net.” And then he thought: ‘If I kill them, I will not know what to do with all the meat. But if I deprive them of their sight, they will not be able to escape, and I can easily lead them back to the city.’ Then, without pity for these gentle creatures, who gazed at him pleadingly, he deprived them of their sight. I was that huntsman, O my father, and now I am atoning for the deed I did! So you see Siddhi is no more guilty than I am. Do not shed her blood!”

And while King Asoka hesitated, moved by his son’s words, yet not knowing whether he should believe them or not, Kanoula suddenly cried:

“If I have told the truth, then let the truth come to my aid! Let a miracle take place! Let my eyes once more become as they were!”

And that very moment his sight was restored. He turned his glorious eyes, full of radiant light, and looked first at the king, and then at Madhavi, both of whom were overjoyed at seeing him restored to his former self. And King Asoka, giving up the thought of vengeance, let the words of pardon fall from his

lips. Siddhi was sent to a solitary place to meditate upon her fault, and King Asoka, together with Prince Kanoula and the gentle Madhavi, whom he kept ever near him, continued to reign in justice over his people.



THE WHITE BIRD

(A Kalmuck Tale)

AGES ago, in the pleasant pasture land known as the Fair Flowergarden, there dwelt a man of the horde who had three daughters and a great herd of goats. And each day one of the three daughters minded the herd in her turn.

One day, when it was the oldest sister's turn to mind the herd, she fell asleep during the heat of the mid-day hour, and when she woke found that one of the goats was missing. So she set out to look for it, and as she was wandering about she came to a rock in which was set a great red door. She opened the door, and entered a little passage at the end of which was another door of shining gold. And when she had opened this door, lo and behold, there was a third door of glittering mother-of-pearl! This door, too, she opened, and found a fourth door of emerald. And the emerald door gave entrance to a palace so filled with gold and precious stones that it dazzled the eyes. She wandered through the whole palace, but there was no living creature in it save in one lofty hall. There, on a costly table, sat a beautiful White Bird on a jewelled perch in a golden cage.

When the White Bird saw the maiden, it said to her, "Maiden, how is it you have come to this place?" And she told him, "One of my father's goats is missing from the herd. I have been looking for it everywhere, for I dare not go home without it. And that is how I came here." Said the White Bird, "If you will promise to be my bride, I will not only tell you where the lost goat is, but will restore it to you as well. But if you refuse, the goat will be lost to your father's herd forever."

Then the maiden laughed and said, "How could I agree to become the bride of a bird? If I must marry you to find my father's goat then it will have to stay lost forever." And with that she went her way, weeping because of the goat she had lost.

The next day when the second sister minded the herd, another goat escaped, and she in turn went in search of it. She, too, came to the red door in the rock, and passing through the other doors into the palace, found the White Bird sitting in his golden cage in the great hall. And like her sister she also refused to become his bride, and returned weeping to her home like her sister.

On the third day the youngest sister went out with the goats, and again a goat strayed from the herd. She, too, found her way to the palace in the rock and saw the White Bird. But when he asked her to become his bride, she said (for she was a bright girl, and suspected

that he might be a hero held captive in the palace in the rock by magic spells): "You are white, O Bird, the color of truth! So I will agree to become your bride after six months have gone by, if you will restore the goat which is lost to me." And the White Bird said, "Go back to your herd, and you will find the lost goat grazing with the rest." And so it was, and the third sister returned home laughing instead of crying.

Soon after this there was a great gathering of the horde at a neighboring temple, with games and contests of skill which lasted thirteen days. And it turned out that among all the maidens of the horde the girl who had promised to become the White Bird's bride was the most beautiful. And among the men the one who was superior in horsemanship, archery and feats of strength was a mighty rider who rode a dappled grey horse. When he had circled the whole assembly three times with the fleetness of the wind, and then ridden off, nothing was talked about but his horsemanship, his strength, and his skill.

The next day, the maiden went to the palace in the rock to visit the White Bird, and the latter said to her, "Tell me who was the most beautiful maiden, and who was the mightiest horseman among the men and women of the horde at the festival?" And she said, "Among the men a stranger who rode a dappled grey steed was the mightiest horseman, and among the maidens I was

the most beautiful." To this the White Bird returned no answer.

And thus it went on every day of the festival. There was neither man nor maiden of the horde who could compete with the girl who had promised to become the White Bird's bride, and the stranger who rode the dappled grey horse.

On the twelfth day, when the girl was at the festival, she happened to sit next to an old, old woman. And when the old woman asked her which maiden of the horde had been declared the most beautiful, and which man the greatest horseman, she told her that she herself was the woman and the stranger who rode the dappled grey steed the man. "Could I become the wife of such a man," she added, "I would have nothing more to wish for all the days of my life!" Said the ancient woman, "And why can you not have such a man for your husband?" Then the tears came to the girl's eyes, and she answered, "I have already promised to become the bride of a White Bird." The old woman, who was very wise and knew many things, replied, "You can win the stranger for your husband, and still keep your promise to the White Bird, if you will do exactly as I say. To-morrow is the thirteenth and last day of the festival. When the time comes for you to go, you must only pretend to set out. But instead of taking the way to the temple, you must go to the palace in the rock and hide behind the emerald door. The White Bird, who

will not know you are there, will leave his jewelled perch, turn into a man, saddle his dappled grey horse and ride to the festival as usual. Then you must come out of your hiding-place, burn his perch, his cage and the white feathers lying on the table. When you have done this, he will be released from his enchantment, and will be a man and not a bird."

The next day the girl who had promised to become the White Bird's bride did exactly as the old woman had told her. And when she had burned the White Bird's perch, his cage and his beautiful feathers, she longed for his return, and hid behind a pillar where she could see him coming a long ways off. At last, when the sun was sinking red below the horizon, he rode up on his dappled grey horse.

"What does this mean?" he asked, when he saw her. "You must have left the festival before I did." "Yes," she answered, "I was the first to get here." And when he entered the palace the next thing he said was, "Where is my perch, where is my cage, where are my feathers?" Said the maiden, "I have burned them all in the fire, so that you might be released from your enchantment, and once more be a man among other men."

But the man who had been the White Bird cried, "Alas, do you know what you have done! In that cage which you have burned I had left not only my feathers, but my soul as well. And now I am in worse case than I was before."

When she heard this the maiden wept bitterly, and pleaded with him to tell her how she could make up for the harm she had done. "Is there no way in which I can restore the soul you have lost?" she asked him. "There is nothing I would not suffer and endure in order to give back your soul to you."

Then the man who had been the White Bird said, "There is one way and only one in which you may save me. To-night the demons will come to fetch me because I have lost my soul. Yet, I can struggle with them for seven days and seven nights without interruption and drive them off in the end, if you help me. While I am struggling with them you must take a stick and beat against the mother-of-pearl door with it. If by the end of the seventh night you have beaten your way through the door, then I will be freed from the power of the demons. But if you grow weary, and cease beating the mother-of-pearl door for a single instant, then the demons will carry me far away, and I will be lost to you."

So the maiden hunted up little motes of feather-grass and with them propped up her eyelids so that she could not fall asleep. Then seizing the stick the man who had been the White Bird gave her, she set to work at nightfall to beat against the mother-of-pearl door. She beat and beat and beat, never growing weary, for seven days and seven nights. But toward the end of the seventh night, the motes of feather-grass fell out of one

of her eyes. She could not keep her eye from closing for an instant, and in that instant the demons seized the man who had been the White Bird and had lost his soul, and carried him off.

The maiden mourned and grieved and would not be consoled. She left the pleasant land of the Fair Flowergarden to look for him in the four corners of the universe, and wherever she wandered she cried, "O you who were once a White Bird and are now the man whom I love, where are you?" She wandered long and she wandered far, over mountain and valley, through deserts and fertile plains. At last, one day, as she went her way, calling out to him as usual, his voice answered her from the top of a high mountain. She was overjoyed, and climbed up its steep side. When she reached the top, however, she heard his voice again, and this time it sounded from the foot of the mountain, beside a stream which flowed there. So she clambered down the mountain and found him at last beside a sacred *Obö*, one of the great heaps of stone raised to the gods by the wayside. There he sat, looking worn and weary, with a great bundle of old boots on his back, as many as he could carry.

When they met he said, "Now my heart is glad within me because we have met. The demons have made me their water carrier. Toiling up and down, from river to mountain-top and back again, I have worn out all these boots you see slung across my back."



There he sat, looking worn and weary, with a great bundle of
old boots on his back



And filled with love and pity the maiden cried, "Tell me, O man whom I love, is there nothing I can do to deliver you out of bondage?" Then the man who had been the White Bird said, "O most faithful of women, there is but one thing and only one to do. You must return to the palace in the rock, and there build another cage, with a jewelled perch like the one that was burned. And when you have built the cage, you must woo my wandering soul back into it. You must call and you must coax it back to the place in which it dwelt. The moment my soul returns to the cage, I myself must return to the place where my soul awaits me. Neither gods nor demons then can hold me back."

Then the maiden returned to the pleasant land of the Fair Flowergarden with a happy heart. In the palace in the rock she built a cage exactly like the one she had burned, and wooed the soul of the man who had been the White Bird back into it. And the moment his soul entered the cage, lo and behold, the man whom she loved was delivered out of the power of the demons, and stood before her, his face radiant with joy! And then the man who had been a White Bird and the maiden who had promised to become his bride were married amid great rejoicings, and thereafter lived happily in their splendid palace in the rock, filled with gold and precious stones.

THE GARDENS OF IREM

(A Persian Tale)

IN the days of the blessed Solomon, there reigned in Egypt a sultan named Assaf bin Safvane. One day he ordered his treasurer to make ready fifty bags of musk, fifty black-eyed camels laden with gold and silver, a sealed bag of pearls and seven bags of jewels so bright that they made the night radiant, as well as a hundred male and female slaves. When all was prepared, he sent his ambassadors out with this caravan and an escort of soldiers to the kingdom of Yemen, to ask for the hand of the king's daughter.

When the King of Yemen first saw the dust of the caravan on the horizon he thought that strangers had invaded his kingdom. But after the ambassadors of the Sultan Assaf had presented their gifts, he entertained them royally, and agreed to give the Egyptian sultan his daughter in marriage, together with a wedding portion of three files of camels laden with brocades of Egypt and Byzantium and collars of pearls, as well as fifty Greek and Chinese slaves. When they reached Cairo, Sultan Assaf rode forth to meet them at the head of his viziers and emirs, and the wedding was celebrated with great pomp and festivity.

In the course of time Allah blessed the Sultan Assaf with a son, who was given the name of Seif al Moulouk. By the time he had reached the age of fourteen the young prince already was versed in every art. He could recite from the Koran with grace and dignity, and draw the bow and handle lance and sword with the skill of an experienced warrior. When he was twenty-one, he was a mirror of accomplishment. One day his father sent for him and had a certain coffer brought from his treasury. Opening it and drawing forth a brocaded robe and a ruby ring he gave them to the prince, saying, "These were sent me by the great Sultan Solomon as a gift, and now I bestow them on you." Prince Seif was greatly pleased, thanked his father and returned to his own apartment with the gifts.

And there, when he examined the brocaded robe more closely, he saw that on its inner side was embroidered the image of a young maiden as beautiful as the new moon. So beautiful was she, in fact, that Seif's whole heart went out to her. Then, suddenly, he realized that he did not know who the original of the picture image might be. He did not even know whether it represented a living person, or was only a work of the imagination. He was so overcome by the thought that he fell in a profound melancholy, from which he could not be roused.

At last, seeing that Seif did nothing but sigh and grieve, that he refused nourishment and would not

speak when spoken to, the Sultan Assaf was informed of his condition. He went to his son's apartment and said, "What weighs upon your heart, my son? Let me know what you desire and you shall have it, even though it cost me the half of my kingdom!" Prince Seif was moved by his father's affection, and with many tears told him that he had fallen in love with the beautiful image woven into the brocaded robe, and that in his despair of ever finding out who the original might be, he had lost all interest in life.

"My son," said the Sultan Assaf, "the original of yonder image really exists. Some years ago, as I looked out of my palace window, I saw a cloud of dust rise on the skyline. When it disappeared, seven *peris*, descendants of the disobedient angels, who dwell in the sandal groves lying beyond the uttermost ends of the earth, stood before my throne. Laying the robe and the jewel I gave you at my feet, they said they were sent to me as gifts of the mighty Solomon. As they unfolded the robe I saw the image and asked, "Is this the portrait of a living creature or a work of the imagination?" And the *peris* replied, "O Sultan, this robe comes from the Gardens of Irem and the picture is that of the daughter of Shebal ben Sharouk, king of the *peris*, the Princess Bedieto l'Djemal. The robe was sent to the Sultan Solomon and he now sends it to you." Then they disappeared and I put away the gifts, until I thought to give you pleasure by presenting them to

you. But it will be hard to find this princess whom you love, for no man knows where the Gardens of Irem lie."

Prince Seif, however, was glad at heart to know that the beautiful image was that of a living being, a *peri* and a princess, and his first impulse was to set out that very day in search of the Gardens of Irem. But his father persuaded him to wait until picked men had been sent out in every direction to discover the road which led to the home of the *peris*.

So the Sultan Assaf's emissaries set forth, some in the direction of Zangebar, others toward Roum, Shiraz, El-Hind and El-Sind, while still others crossed the seas of Tschin and Matchin. But after an absence of many months they all returned, and though they had traversed all the lands of the earth, none had been able to find the road which led to the Gardens of Irem.

But Prince Seif was not content with their report. "Unless I can win to the Gardens of Irem and find the lovely Princess Bedieto l'Djemal," he said to his father, "my life will be empty of happiness." So the Sultan Assaf fitted out a great ship, freighted it with priceless treasures, and equipped it with slaves, guards and mariners; and Prince Seif, after bidding him farewell, set out full of hope in search of the Gardens of Irem.

After sailing for forty days and nights they reached the land of China. There the *Fagfour*, or Emperor, received Seif with much honor and made him rich gifts.

of precious metals. Yet he could tell him nothing of the Gardens of Irem. But one of the wise men of his court said, "Prince, I have spent my life in travel. I have wandered over plains, mountains and deserts and crossed the oceans the wide world over, but never have I heard of the Gardens of Irem. Perhaps if you inquire at Istamboul you may find some one who knows where these gardens lie, for all the travellers and merchants who have been to Kaf, the mountain which lies at the extremity of the earth, must pass that way."

So Prince Seif took leave of the *Fagfour* of China and set out for Istamboul. One day, however, a tremendous storm arose, the ship floated on the mountainous waves like a bubble of air, and though all the rich cargo was flung overboard to lighten the vessel, only Prince Seif and some fifty men of the hundreds of slaves, guards and mariners who had crowded its decks were left when the ship was cast ashore on an unknown coast. No sooner had those who had escaped the shipwreck managed to get ashore, than they were seized by a troop of gigantic black savages. The savages dragged them off to their village and there Seif and his men were compelled to turn the mills which ground the grain for the tribe until their hands were covered with blisters. One day Seif and two of his companions managed to escape during the night. On the beach where their ship had stranded they found a little skiff, and commending their souls to Allah, they pushed it out into

the waves. For ten days they were driven by the winds until they came to an island covered with date and almond trees, which supplied them with food. When night came they climbed into the date-trees to sleep in safety and it was well they did so. For during the hours of darkness hundreds of savage beasts appeared and roamed about beneath the branches. And in the sea great fish raised their heads from the water, and the sound of their cries was like thunder, while the sea grew bright as day with phosphorescence. Prince Seif and his companions were so frightened that when dawn broke they hastened to get into their skiff and set sail.

Soon they came to another island and this was full of wonders. It was green with trees whose crowns rose to the skies. The leaves of one tree had the shape of serpents, and its fruit resembled a man's head. During the night these skull-shaped fruits dropped to the ground with a curious sound—*wac wac, wac wac*—and when dawn came up they flew into place again among the branches. Another tree, when the wind blew through its leaves, seemed to burst into laughter, and there were aloes which at nightfall spread a radiance like fire around them. One of the strangest of all was the pepper-tree. It was very tall, and from its top hung five cottony husks and five pepper-grapes. Would you believe it? During the night the pepper-grapes sang as sweetly as the nightingale, and when it

rained the leaves spread themselves around the grapes so that the pepper would not lose its strength. Alas, while Prince Seif and his companions wandered about the island, looking at the trees and watching the peacocks, parakeets and forest doves which fluttered through the branches, they were suddenly surprised by savage *nesmas*, ferocious creatures like great apes, and dragged off to their dwellings high in the tree-tops! What became of his companions Prince Seif never knew, but he himself managed to escape from the *nesma* by whom he had been seized, under cover of the darkness. After wandering about the island for three days and nights, afraid of being recaptured any moment, he at last came to a road.

It led him to a handsome city with fine streets and bazaars, but nowhere did he see a single human being, for the city was inhabited entirely by monkeys with heads like dogs and human hands and feet, who called themselves *segsar*. As soon as they saw the prince they led him to their king, who lived in a lofty gilded palace, with great halls, in one of which he was sitting on an aloe-wood throne, encrusted with cornelian and rubies. This king was a young man, a human being, and the ruler of all the monkey-folk. He asked Prince Seif how he had come to the island, and the latter told him all his adventures and then said, "Tell me, brother, do you know where the Gardens of Irem lie?" The king of the *segsar* shook his head. "This is the first

time I have ever heard of them," he replied, "so I cannot aid you."

Then the king had a banquet spread for Prince Seif. Fruits and honey were carried in on plates of silver and cornelian, and after they had eaten, sorbets were served and the monkeys danced, stamping the ground, to the great amusement of the prince. At dawn ten thousand monkeys came to pay their respects to their king, each carrying a staff whose extremity was adorned with three rubies. After spending several days in the monkey city, Prince Seif once more set out on a good horse the king of the *segsar* had given him, to search for the Gardens of Irem. He rode on and on, until he came to Lawan, the island where the sandalwood grows, and which is known as "the uttermost isle." There, owing to the miraculous power of Allah, trees covered with leaves and fruit rise out of the ground every morning, and disappear beneath the earth again at nightfall. On this island there are ants as large as dogs who make it hard to secure the precious sandal-wood. Those who come for the sandal-wood ride Arab steeds and carry a quarter of meat slung across their saddles. When they come to the trees they cut the branches of sandal-wood with a hatchet and gather them, and then, when the great termite ants draw near, they fling them the quarter of meat. While the ants are busy devouring it, they make off with the sandal-wood.

Suddenly, while Prince Seif was riding through the island of Lawan, he saw in the air just over his head, a great bird, as large as a camel, with red eyes and green claws. Catching hold of one of its claws, and shutting his eyes, he commended himself to Allah, and allowed himself to be dragged from his saddle. The bird carried him first over a high mountain and then across a vast sea, and finally descending in a thick forest, alighted on a tree where it had built its nest, which contained four fledglings. No sooner had Seif dropped into the nest, than a gigantic serpent, as long as a minaret, and with a flaming breath drew near, and began to battle with the bird. The serpent proved to be the stronger of the two and when it had done away with the bird, it crept up the tree and did away with the fledglings. Then the great snake crept off without seeing Prince Seif, who had hidden in the foliage.

Now came days of trial and suffering for Seif. Alone, hungry and thirsty, worn and weary, his eyes filled with tears and his heart with grief, he wandered through forest and desert until, one day, he found a green oasis in the sea of sand, and climbing a little hill beheld in the distance a pavilion built of ivory.

He hastened to it and as he drew near sweet odors filled his nostrils. What was his surprise, however, when he explored the pavilion and went through its chambers, to find that there was no one in it. Yet many valuable objects were scattered about the rooms, among

them a glittering sword, which he buckled on. Calling on Allah to aid him, he continued his investigations until he came to a curtained doorway. Raising the curtain he found himself in a hall entirely hung with rich striped stuffs. Against each of the four walls of the hall stood a throne on which lay an ingot of red gold. Round about were spread splendid garments, costly rugs and rich, four-cushioned settees. From the four walls hung gilded cages filled with nightingales and parakeets, which sang continually. Leaving this hall, Seif next came to an apartment whose door was barred and guarded by a talisman in the form of a lion holding a curtain in its claw. Prince Seif struck the lion a blow on the head with the pommel of his sword, and at once the talisman released the curtain. Then the Prince forced the lock which it had hidden and entered the room.

There, on a golden couch, lay a beautiful girl, whose head was covered with a silken veil. Prince Seif raised the veil, and saw she was lovelier than a hundred thousand paintings, with a face like the radiant moon, a waist like the cypress, and as charming as the partridge which ruffles its plumage. Her brow shone like the star *Zouhré*, which the unbelievers call Venus, and her little mouth seemed meant to speak only the sweetest words.

In vain Seif tried to awaken her. "Is it possible that she is dead?" thought he. At that moment his

eyes fell on a wooden tablet. He picked it up, and as he left the room the sleeping maiden at once awoke, opened her eyes and sat up on the couch. The Prince, who had glanced behind him, returned to her, but when he reached the couch she had already fallen back into her trance-like slumber. Then Seif realized that the enchanted tablet kept her asleep.

He threw it far from him out of the window, and the maiden opened her eyes and told him her story. Said she, "My name is Melike, and I am the daughter of the King of Serendib. One day I was carried off in a cloud of dust to the ivory pavilion by the son of the king of the *divs*, or *djinns*. My troth was plighted to the son of a neighboring king, but the *div* who holds me captive in the ivory pavilion by his enchantments, hopes that I will agree to wed him and forget my earthly love. The ivory pavilion in which we now are," continued the Princess Melike, "is on the island of Isfend Tady, three years' journey from the dwellings of men. One day, while the *div* was vainly begging me to become his bride, I asked him some questions about the *djinni*. Among other things, I asked him where the *divs* kept their souls. At first he did not want to tell me, but finally he said, 'My soul lies in a glass casket at the bottom of the sea.' 'And how can it be withdrawn,' I said. 'If any one possesses the ring of Solomon,' he answered, 'all he need do is to thrust his hand into the water and say, "In the name

of Solomon, rise from the deep!" And the glass casket will at once float to the surface.' "

Prince Seif was delighted. "Princess," he cried, "the ring of Solomon—the blessing of Allah be upon him!—is in my possession," and he showed her the ruby ring he wore. "Now I can deliver you from your cruel jailor." Together with the princess he at once went down to the sea-shore, and in response to Seid's command, the glass casket at once rose to the surface of the water. Carrying it back to the ivory pavilion they opened it, and a pigeon flew out whose head Seif cut off with a blow of his sword. At once a violent tempest arose outside the pavilion, and in its midst appeared a monstrous *div*, a demon as large as a mountain. Uttering a lamentable howl, he crashed to earth and yielded his soul to Iblis, the master of Gehenna.

Seif now built a raft of aloe-wood, covered it with a layer of brush and branches, and on them piled gold, rubies and cornelian taken from the ivory pavilion. Pushing off from the island, Seif and Melike, after floating for many days, finally reached the land of Serendib. There the king was overjoyed to see his daughter once more, and embracing Seif, her deliverer, treated him with every honor. But Seif was not happy. Though he went about in rich robes and rode an Arab steed with saddle and bridle of gold, he still longed for the Gardens of Irem, where dwelt the beautiful princess Bedieto l'Djemal.

He had told the Princess of Serendib, whom he had rescued, how wretched he was and why, and finally the latter took pity on him—though she feared it might not make for his happiness, for how could a human being hope to win the hand of a *peri* princess?—and gave him news which filled his heart with joy. “Once a month,” said the Princess of Serendib, “the beautiful Bedieto l’Djemal comes from the Gardens of Irem to visit my mother, who was her foster-mother.” So when, sure enough, Bedieto l’Djemal arrived a few days later, Melike arranged matters so that Seif met her, as though by chance, in the palace gardens. And if he had been charmed by the image of the *peri* princess on the robe, when he saw her in all her living loveliness he could not contain himself. He told her the tale of his love and his adventures, and as she listened it was easy to see that her heart was moved. But still she tried to induce him to give up the hope of winning her. “I am a *peri* and you are but a human being. Never would my father permit us to wed.” With tears streaming down her cheeks she asked, “Are there not plenty of kings’ daughters in the world among whom you may choose a mate?” But Seif fell at her feet and declared that for him there was none other than herself. Then Bedieto l’Djemal thought for a moment and said, “Perhaps, if you are faithful, there might be a way to overcome the objections my father would have to our union. You must go to my aunt,

Serv Banou, who lives in the City of Silver, and induce her to help us, for she has great influence with my father. But to reach the City of Silver, you will have to cross a desert, a fiery mountain and a boiling sea."

"Whatever you say that will I do," replied Prince Seif. So Bedieto l'Djemal gave him an *afrit* of her train, to transport him to his destination. With many vows of affection and high hopes Seif took leave of her and straddling the *afrit's* neck, he rose into the air. They flew over the desert, the fiery mountain and the boiling sea, and then the *afrit* said, "Close your eyes!" When Seif did so he shot up into the higher heavens and deposited his burden in the City of Silver. "Open your eyes!" he then said, and Seif opened them.

He was in a city in which the ground was of silver, and whose houses were built of gold, cornelian and coral in place of bricks. Forests of aloes and sandalwood rose to the skies, and crystal waters spouted from many fountains. Above each fountain was a canopy formed of a tissue of seven-colored silk, fastened with golden nails. Seif marvelled at all this wealth. In the palace to which the *afrit* led him he found a woman of surpassing beauty, dressed in a green robe, who sat on a throne. This was Serv Banou, and when Seif had told her his tale she shook her head and cried, "I doubt if you will succeed in winning Bedieto l'Djemal's hand. The *peris* do not trust man, for too often he is deceitful and void of faith." When Seif heard these harsh

words he was so distressed that he lost consciousness. Seeing this Serv Banou was convinced of his sincerity, and ordered that his face be sprinkled with rose-water to recall him to his senses. And when he regained consciousness she promised, for her niece's sake, to have him carried to the Gardens of Irem, whither she herself would go to plead his cause with Bedieto l'Djemal's father, Shebal Shah bin Sharouk, the king of the *peris*.

That night Seif spent in the City of Silver and the following day Serv Banou ordered the *afrit* to carry him to the Gardens of Irem. Seated on the *afrit's* neck, Seif in due time reached the place he had vainly striven to find for years. There the *afrit* deposited him at the foot of a tree and at once sped away to report to Bedieto l'Djemal.

The Gardens of Irem were as beautiful as those of paradise itself. And as he looked on their beauty the tears suddenly came to Seif al Moulouk's eyes. He thought of his father, the Sultan Assaf, and of his distant home. "O my father!" he cried, sobbing. "How long I have left you to grieve for me! Little do you know that at this very moment I am wandering among the roses of the Gardens of Irem!" Yet, in spite of his tears, his heart grew glad again within him. At last he had reached the goal of his dreams. The *peri* princess returned his love, and once Shah Shebal had listened to his suit and granted him her hand, he could return and rejoice the heart of the father who so long

had mourned him as lost. His eyes were enchanted by the loveliness of innumerable fragrant flowers, his ears drank in the song of thousands of nightingales, and lulled by the calm and peaceful beauty of the Gardens of Irem, he fell asleep in the shadow of the tree beneath which the *afrit* had left him.

Now while he slept the brothers of the *div* whom he had slain had sent out their subject demons everywhere to search for the being who had slain him. And though they feared their powerful enemy, the king of the *peris*, still a party of *divs* entered the Gardens of Irem to search there, and discovered Seif asleep beneath his tree. A few questions soon convinced them that they had found the person who had destroyed the owner of the ivory pavilion, and they at once seized Seif and hurried off with him to the city of the *divs*, Koulzoum, which stood on a lofty mountain-top, far from the Gardens of Irem. There he was flung into a deep, dark cistern to await the hour of death.

Meanwhile Serv Banou had sought out her brother, Shah Shebal, and told him the tale of the love of Seif al Moulouk, son of the Sultan of Egypt, for his daughter, the Princess Bedieto l'Djemal. And so touching a story did she make of all the trials and tribulations which Seif had undergone for love's sake, and so clearly did she show that Bedieto l'Djemal would never be happy if he did not accept Seif as a son-in-law, that finally Shah Shebal—though at first he had roared

with fury—was won over and gave his consent to the marriage.

Serv Banou then told him that Seif was in the Gardens of Irem that very moment, awaiting his decision, and when he heard this, Shah Shebal at once sent out his guards, and ordered them to bring the prince into his presence. But after a thorough search they returned and declared that Seif was nowhere to be found. Then the *afrit* was sent for and questioned, and told how he had left Seif beneath a tree. Finally Shaḥ Shebal ben Sharouk sent out thousands of *peris* in all four directions to search for Seif, and in due course of time learned that he had been seized by the *divs* and was held captive in their city of Koulzoun. At once Shah Shebal gathered an enormous host of *peris*, quickly defeated the *divs* who gathered to oppose him and took their city. There a rope was let down into the cistern into which Seif had been cast and—praising Allah to whom all praise is due!—he clambered out and fell at the feet of Shah Shebal, who graciously raised him, and told him that his trials were over.

On their return to Shah Shebal's kingdom Seif found the beautiful Princess, Bedieto l'Djemal awaiting him. There, that very night, Shah Shebal laid his daughter's hand in Seif's and gave her to him as his bride. The Gardens of Irem were flooded in radiance and glowed with a thousand colors, pale reds and dark crimsons, emerald greens, golden yellows, silvery blues and rich

purples, for the souls of the flowers shone with joy in their chalices and petals because of the happiness of the lovely Bedieto l'Djemal, their princess. The wedding festivities lasted for forty days and forty nights, the nightingales of the Gardens of Irem and the most skilled of the *peri* musicians rivalled each other in making music, and gold pieces were scattered by Shah Shebal with a lavish hand in Seif's honor. At the end of that time, Seif said farewell to Shah Shebal, and set forth to return with his bride to his father's kingdom. The king of the *peris* provided him with a thousand *afrits* laden with every sort of treasure to be found in the Gardens of Irem, load upon load of red gold and pale gold, pearls, cornelians, rubies, emeralds, and precious stones of every kind, of attar of roses and rare perfumes and spices such as earth does not produce. There was no king among the kings of earth whose riches could compare with those of Prince Seif. The *afrits* swiftly carried Seif, his bride and the treasures through the air and, depositing them before the gates of Cairo, disappeared with a rush of giant wings. Then the Sultan Assaf came out to meet his son, embraced him and the beautiful Bedieto l'Djemal with tears of joy, and led them into the palace. There he called together his viziers and emirs and in the presence of all resigned his crown to his son, and had him proclaimed Sultan of Egypt in his stead. Seif al Mourouk and the beautiful Bedieto l'Djemal lived in untroubled happiness, and

whenever they longed for the delights of the Gardens of Irem, the sight and odor of their heavenly flowers, and the song of their nightingales, they were taken there for as long as they wished to stay.



THE UNGRATEFUL BRAHMIN

(A Tale from the Sanskrit)

A BRAHMIN must lead a blameless life. His heart must be pure as the clear white of the jasmine-blossom or the bright radiance of camphor, the silver of the clouds or the milk-white gleam of pearls. The pious Brahmin may beg, but only from those of his faith, and he should be content to live on roots, green herbs, rice and grain. Never should he harm any living creature.

But all Brahmins are not as they should be. Once upon a time there was a Brahmin named Gautama who was not content with roots and green herbs. So when, in his wanderings, he came to a village of meat-eating savages who did not follow the law of Brahma, but lived a carefree life in the midst of plenty, he decided to settle down there. A wealthy villager took him in and told him he might live with him as long as he chose; and forgetful of his vows, Gautama dwelt in the house of the kind-hearted savage. He, a Brahmin, whose religion forbade him to harm any living creature, went out every day with bow and arrow, like the other savages, and killed the red geese. And the more

skilful he became in the use of his weapons, the more eager he was to use them.

One day another Brahmin came to the village. This Brahmin was indeed a holy man. His gown was torn and ragged, and the skin of the black antelope which hung down his back was worn and old. He was a man of pure life, a student of the holy books and strict in keeping every rule of his faith. He had been Gautama's schoolmate. When he came to the village of savages where the latter lived, he looked about in vain for a Brahmin home in which he might rest and refresh himself; for a Brahmin must eat only food which is given him by Brahmin hands. He happened to come to the house where Gautama dwelt, and there stood Gautama on the threshold. He had just returned from the chase, and held his weapons in one hand and a brace of red geese in the other. It was plain he had forgotten his Brahmin vows.

"How low have you fallen, Gautama!" said his friend. "Have you forgotten that you are a Brahmin, that you have vows and duties to observe? Have you forgotten, O hunter of geese, that you should practise fasting and privation, and never harm a living creature? That you should be clean of life, self-controlled, charitable and full of mercy?"

Gautama, when his friend had ended, replied, "Alas, only eagerness to live and to enjoy have brought me to this pass! I am grateful to you for visiting me. Stay

with me over night, and to-morrow we will leave this village of savages together." Out of pity for his friend the Brahmin promised to spend the night in the house and went to bed, though he would touch no food in spite of his hunger. Then, while he slept, Gautama crept out of the house, and wandered away from the village.

After a time he fell in with a caravan of merchants who intended to make a sea voyage, and he joined their party on its way to the ocean. But in a mountain forest the caravan was suddenly attacked by a mad elephant, and almost totally destroyed. Gautama escaped as though by a miracle. He did not know which way to turn, but love of life was strong within him, and he pressed on as fast as he was able to the north. He had lost sight of the caravan and that part of the country through which it had been passing, and strayed through the forest like some *kimpurusha*, some demon creature of the wilderness.

At last he came to a stretch of land bordering the sea, and without ways or paths and, finally, to a wood full of blossoming trees, divinely beautiful. It was as fair as *Nandara*, the paradise of the god Indra. There were great clumps of the noblest mangoes, whose fruit ripened in all four seasons of the year; there were groves of *shala* and *tamala*-trees, of slender palms, black olean-
ders, and towering sandals. The heights of the surrounding mountains were pleasant to look upon, and

veiled in fragrant mists, and twittering birds swarmed in the branches on every side.

Gautama was cheered by the voices of the birds, and walked toward the direction from which they sounded. Soon he found himself on a delightful plain, which rejoiced his soul, for it was strewn with golden sand, and in this plain rose an enormous *njagroda*-tree, from whose aerial roots others had sprung up, surrounding the parent tree in graceful circles. Its boughs, in keeping with the vastness of the tree itself, made it look like a gigantic umbrella. Its roots were bedewed with the costliest sandal-water, and it was covered with a heavenly wealth of leaves. Its magnificence was such that it made one think of the hall in which thrones the great god Brahma.

Gautama drew near the tree and seated himself beneath it. As he sat there a soothing breeze arose, stirring its blossoms and refreshing Gautama's weary limbs. Feeling at peace with himself and all the world, the Brahmin lay down and slept, and while he slept the sun went down.

Now when the sun had disappeared and the twilight had fallen, a wonderful bird came flying from Brahma's heaven back to this tree in which he made his home. The bird's name was Nadidschanga, and he was Brahma's dearest friend, the wise Heron King, son of the divine sage, Kaschjapa. On earth he was known as the Royal Bird, and there was none in all the world who

might compare with him. He wore shining jewels; gems that sparkled like suns adorned all his limbs, and the radiant bird descended to earth like a child of the gods in a halo of flaming beauty.

Gautama saw him arrive with astonishment. And since the Brahmin was hungry and thirsty, he planned to kill him as he looked at him. For little thought Gautama of his vow never to harm a living creature when his stomach spoke. But the Heron King said, "You are welcome, Brahmin! A kind fate has led you to my home. The sun has gone to rest and the twilight deepens. You have entered my dwelling, a cherished guest, whom I am glad to receive. You shall leave me with contentment to-morrow, for I shall honor you as the law of hospitality commands."

Gautama's astonishment increased when he heard this gracious speech, and he regarded the bird with curiosity. Then Nadidschanga continued, "I am Kaschjapa's son, and happy to be your host. Welcome to my hearth, best among Brahmins!" He heaped up a *śēat* of *chala*-blossoms for him, and prepared great fish for his supper. These fish were so large that they might have swam in the ruts of King Baghiratha's chariot, the ruts which made the bed of the holy Ganges. Yes, delicate, fat fish, prepared over a well-nourished fire, were what the Heron King offered Gautama. And when the Brahmin had ended his savory meal, the Heron King fanned him with his radiant wings so that

he might be refreshed. When he had rested Nadidschanga inquired as to his family. But Gautama only answered, "I am a Brahmin and am named Gautama."

Then Nadidschanga directed him to a great couch of leaves, fragrant with heavenly flowers, and once his guest had stretched himself out comfortably, the Heron King inquired, "And what has led you hither?" Gautama answered, "I am a poor man, O bird of wisdom, and have the intention of going down to the sea to gain riches!" Affectionately the son of Kaschjapa replied, "Let your heart be at ease. Your wish shall be granted. The gods teach us that man may gain riches in any one of four ways: through inheritance, through the hand of fate, through love, and through friendship. I have become your friend and you mine. So I shall see to it that you gain riches."

When the morning dawned, Nadidschanga inquired of Gautama how he had slept and then said, "Take yonder road which lies before you, my friend, and your wish shall come true. Three miles distant lives my powerful friend, Virupatkschka, the King of all the *Rakschkas*, the demons. Go to him, noble Brahmin, for I shall speak to him, and he will give you whatever wealth your heart desires."

Gautama at once set out gaily on his way, eating as he went of the fruits of the forest, which tasted like *amrita*, the nectar of the gods. His nostrils drew in the fragrance of the sandals, aloes and laurels which

rose in groves along the road, till he drew near Meruv-radscha, the city of the demons. Its walls, gateways and towers were of rock, and all the utensils in the city were made of rock as well. The wise King of the *Rakschkas* had already been informed that his friend the Heron King had sent him a guest, one to whom he was well-inclined, so he cried to his servants, "Gautama must be standing before the city gate! Make haste and bring him into my presence!"

Then the *Rakschkas*, swift as falcons, ran out of the king's palace, and hurried to the gate, crying, "Gautama! Gautama!" And when they found him they said, "Make haste! Come quickly! The King of the *Rakschkas*, the hero Virupatschka, wished to see you! He wishes to see you at once, so make haste!" And the Brahmin ran as fast as he could, in order not to keep the king of the demons waiting.

In his magnificent palace Virupatschka received Gautama with honor, and had him sit down in a splendid seat. Then he asked him about his family, his study of the holy books, and similar questions. But the Brahmin could only speak of his family. So the king saw that he was talking to a man who lacked the inner grace of the Brahmin nature. Since he could only tell of his family, this man long ago must have given up the study of the holy books.

Finally Virupatschka said, "Where do you live, worthy man? Tell me the truth—you have nothing

to fear from me." So Gautama answered, "I come from the Middle Country, but I have been living in the house of a savage." But the King of the *Rakschkas* thought, "What are the odds. In the month of Kartika, on the day when the moon is full, I entertain a thousand noble Brahmins in my palace. Let this one who dwells in the house of a savage be my guest as well. He has been sent to me by my friend the Heron King. I have already heaped up treasure to be given away that day. Let him have his share. Why give him further thought?"

Soon the thousand Brahmins arrived. They were all learned men, clad in flowing silken robes adorned with jewels. The king of the *Rakschkas* received them as Brahma's law commands. His servants prepared seats for them on the ground, strewed it with the finest *kusha* grass, and welcomed them with fragrant *darbha*-water. After homage had been paid the gods, the Brahmins, and Gautama among them, all received beautiful golden plates, marked by the lightning, and filled with cooked rice over which butter and honey had been poured. Virupatkschka always entertained the Brahmins with the very choicest food on the days of the full moon in the months Kartika and Magha. And on the day of the full moon in Kartika he made gifts to the Brahmins of gold, silver, jewels and pearls. Now, as he had done in other years, the King of the *Rakschkas* said to his guests, and pointed to great heaps of treasure, "Take

as many of these jewels as you wish, and when you set out for home do not forget the plates from which you have eaten!"

So each of the Brahmins took as many jewels as his heart desired, and the king dismissed them with the words which protected the holy men who had come to his feast from every land on earth from the *Rakschkas*, his demon subjects: "For this one day, ye Brahmins, no *Rakschka* will harm you! And now that you have enjoyed yourselves to your hearts' content, make haste to leave!"

As soon as he had said this, the Brahmins ran off in groups in every direction, and Gautama followed their example. He had gathered up so much gold that he was scarcely able to drag himself along. But he hurried back to the great *njagroda*-tree, where he sank to earth, weary, panting and hungry. At once the noble Heron King hastened up, greeted him with the affection one shows a friend, and fanned away his fatigue with the tips of his mighty wings. Then he prepared a meal for him, but Gautama, when he had eaten and completely recovered, thought to himself, "My greed misled me. I have gathered a tremendous load of this beautiful gold and I still have a long, long way to go. And while I travel I will have nothing to eat. What shall I do to prevent myself from starving?" And he thought and thought, but could think of nothing in the way of food to keep him alive during his journey. And

then, suddenly, an idea came to the ungrateful Brahmin. He thought, "Here is the Heron King close at hand. He would supply a fine, large piece of meat. I will slay him and carry him off with me quickly."

Now the hospitable bird, in order to protect his guest, had built a fire which shone afar near Gautama's couch. Then, in perfect trust and confidence, he had lain down and fallen asleep by Gautama's side. That ungrateful wretch, on the contrary, had stayed awake, because he meant to kill his benefactor. And he slew the Heron King, who had trusted him, with a burning brand. After he had done this, he was so pleased that he never thought of the consequences of his evil deed. He tore out Nadidschanga's radiant feathers, plucked him and roasted him in the fire; then he took him and his gold and hurried off as rapidly as he could.

When the next day had passed Virupatschka said to his sons, "I have not seen the noble Heron King all day long. As a rule he flies up to Brahma at dawn to do him homage, and he never returns to his home without first visiting me. Two nights have passed, and two dawns have gone, and yet Nadidschanga has not come to my palace. Now my heart is not free from care. Look around and see what has become of my friend. That Brahmin who did not study the holy books, and who lacked the inward grace, went back to him. I fear that the contemptible rascal may have harmed the Heron King. I could see by his looks that his life was evil,

and that evil was in his mind. Yes, Gautama went back to Nadidschanga, and this disturbs my soul. Therefore hasten, my sons, to Nadidschanga's dwelling, and let us hope that the noble Heron King, as pure of heart as the mirror of the Milky Way, is still alive!"

At once Virupatkschka's sons, together with other *Rakschkas*, hurried to the *njagroda*-tree, and there they found Nadidschanga's bones. Weeping bitterly, the sons of the wise king of the demons hastened after Gautama. Before long they had come up to him and seized him. Yet the wingless body of the Heron King was not in his possession. As Gautama hurried through the forest the body of Nadidschanga, which he carried beneath his arm, had suddenly vanished into thin air and his hunger had been cheated. But Gautama still had the jewelled feathers Nadidschanga wore on his head, and this was enough to prove his guilt. So the *Rakschkas* took Gautama and quickly brought him to Meruv-radscha, the city of the demons, and there showed their ruler the jewelled headdress of his friend.

King Virupatkschka, his minister, and his priests burst into tears at the sight, and the whole palace resounded with their cries of grief. The whole city, men, women and children, mourned, for all had loved the Heron King. And then the king Virupatkschka commanded his sons to make an end of the evildoer.

But the demon *Rakschkas* would not touch Gautama. They shuddered at the thought of soiling their spears

and lances with the blood of so ignoble a wretch. And they said, "Let the slaves slay this lowest of all living creatures, for he is too vile for us to slay!" So the king told the *Rakschkas* to cast him to the slaves. But even the slaves would not lift a weapon to do away with him. "We are slaves, O King," they said, "but we could not stoop to touch so infamous a thing!" Even the demons and their slaves, who shrink from nothing, shrank from laying hands on such a monster of ingratitude. One who slays a Brahmin, one who is a thief, and one who has broken his vows may still make atonement, but for the ungrateful man, atonement is not possible!

So Gautama passed out of the city of the demons unharmed, taking with him his gold. But the loathing and contempt which even the demons had shown him had aroused his conscience. Soon he could not endure himself, he could not bear to be in his own company, and coming to the *njagroda*-tree where he had committed his crime, life grew to be so great a burden that he begged the gods to let him die. But this they would not do, and at last Gautama—condemned to live and loathing life—knew that nothing may atone for ingratitude, the sin which is beyond forgiving.

But what became of the body of Nadidschanga, which had vanished into thin air in the forest? Brahma, who sees all, had called it back to his heaven. There he breathed on it, and the soul of Nadidschanga

returned; new jewelled wings grew forth from his body, and new plumes from his head, and in a trice there stood the wise Heron King in all his former radiant beauty. And singing the praises of Brahma, he joyfully returned to his home in the blossoming *njagroda*-tree, to surprise his friend King Viru-patkschka with a visit the following day.



THE PRINCE WHO LEARNED THE WEAVER'S TRADE

(An Armenian Tale)

MANY hundred years ago, a Sultan of Constantinople once set forth with a great retinue of courtiers, guards and attendants, and the young prince who was his son and heir, to make a pleasure journey into the land of Kurdistan. With his guards, known as the "Slaves of the Palace," and all his train of dignitaries and great lords, litter-bearers, camel-drivers and camp-followers, the Sultan traversed rivers and forests, ascended lofty mountains and crossed vast plains, covered with grassy meadows and fields of grain, and finally reached the country of the Kurds. There it happened that one day the imperial caravan came to a large Kurdish village surrounded by verdant meadows, where it set up its tents in order to repose after the fatigue of travel. The village was filled with people, for it was the day of the fair. Everywhere men came and went, selling or buying horses, sheep, vegetables and fruit, as well as household utensils, robes of silk and cotton, and the magnificent rugs of a thousand bright colors and fantastic designs, which were woven on the looms of the country.

Now the young prince, who had strayed from his father's great encampment, whose white tents rose upon the green fields, found his way to the village fair, and there made the acquaintance of a young and lovely village girl. After having talked a long time to her, the prince was so charmed by her wit and beauty, that he returned to his father and told him he wished to marry her. "My son," said the Sultan, "give up this idea! Who is this girl? She is only a simple village maid and a Kurdish one into the bargain. I have another wife in mind for you: the daughter of the wealthiest among the great pashas of Constantinople."

But the young prince, while he replied to his father with the utmost respect, showed so plainly that his heart was set upon marrying the village girl to whom he had spoken, even though he were obliged to spend the rest of his life in a village of Kurdistan, that the Sultan in the end yielded to his entreaties and sent for the young girl to be brought into his presence. The Sultan received her alone in his great tent of red silk, guarded by tall Nubian slaves with golden scimitars, and hung with green banners and trophies of arms.

"I am willing to accept you as my daughter-in-law," he said to her, and stroked his beard. "Are you willing to wed my son?"

"O Padishah!" she answered, without seeming to be in the least impressed, "what trade has your son learned?"

"Trade, trade?" cried the Sultan, for he was much astonished. "See here, my good girl, are you mad? What have trades to do with my son, the son of a Sultan, who in Allah's good time will reign over the Osmanli?"

"My Lord Padishah, I know nothing about the sons of sultans or the rulers of the Osmanli. But the man I marry must know a trade. If the young man, your son, has learned a trade, then I will marry him. And if not, then not." And that was the end of it, so far as the Kurdish girl was concerned, for it was not possible to make her change her mind.

Seeing how matters stood, the prince, since there was nothing else to do, at last decided to learn a trade; and while his father the Sultan returned to Constantinople with his splendid retinue, his pashas and his begs, his guards and his servants, the young man remained in the Kurdish village to serve his apprenticeship.

He had chosen to learn the trade of a weaver, and become a weaver of rugs. Since he was anything but clumsy and in addition was eager to learn, he made rapid progress, and at the end of a year had become a skillful rug-weaver. And thereupon the girl readily consented to become his wife, and both of them set out for Constantinople, where their wedding was celebrated upon their arrival, and the Sultan decreed that the city should be given up to festivals and rejoicing for the space of seven days.



The Sultan received her alone in his great tent of red silk.

Now it happened that some months after his marriage, the young prince was told that in such and such a street of the city, near an ancient bridge, there was to be found a tavern, mean and insignificant to all outward appearance, in which more delicately cooked and savory food was served than in all the other taverns of Constantinople put together. This seemed strange to the prince, and being inquisitive by nature, he decided to find out for himself whether or no this were the truth. So he disguised himself as a well-to-do merchant, thrust a bag of gold-pieces into his girdle, and went to the tavern.

"I wish to be served with the best you have in the place," he said as he entered. And at once the inn-keeper ushered him into a small chamber reserved for guests of distinction, brought him a plate heaped with victuals of every kind and left him there, face to face with his dinner.

The prince began to eat, and while he was eating—not without considerable surprise—the really delicious meats which had been prepared in this very ordinary-looking inn, he suddenly noticed that he was descending. And dinner, table and the divan on which he was seated were all descending with him. In another moment the opening in the floor of the chamber left by the trap-door on which he had gone down closed above him, and he found himself in a profound dungeon, dimly lit by a narrow air-hole. Here four or five rob-

bers, the confederates of the wicked inn-keeper, flung themselves upon him and prepared to stab him to death with their daggers. But the prince did not lose his presence of mind.

"If you kill me," said he to the robbers, "what will you gain thereby? Take the gold I have about my person and keep me here. I am a rug-merchant, and before I began to buy and sell rugs I learned how to weave them myself. Now if you will supply me with the material with which to work in this cavern, you will reap a handsome profit by selling my rugs."

The robbers thought it over and at length agreed to his proposal. The materials he needed were brought to him and he remained in the dungeon, where he at once set to work for, thought he, a live rug-weaver is better than a dead prince. And thus he saved his life because he knew a trade.

When the prince, however, did not return to the palace, his young wife was very much disturbed, and went to the Sultan. The Sultan, in turn became alarmed, sent out men to look for his son in all the streets and byways of Constantinople, and offered a great reward for any news of his whereabouts. But nowhere could any trace of the prince be discovered, nor was there any news to be had of him. The Sultan, his daughter-in-law, the court and finally the whole nation, were plunged in the deepest sorrow.

The robbers, like every one else in Constantinople,

had heard the mysterious disappearance of the young prince discussed, but it never entered their heads that he might be the weaver of rugs hidden away in their dungeon. The pretended rug-merchant in the meantime worked away without stopping, and the robbers looked forward with much pleasure to obtaining a good price for the splendid piece of work that was taking shape on his loom. From time to time these wretches lowered some other diner who had found his way to the tavern, and whom they suspected of being well equipped with gold pieces, or whose jewels had caught their eye, into the cave. There he would be slain without pity in the presence of the prince, unable to defend the unfortunate victim. And, before dawn, the body of the man who had been slain would be cast into the Bosphorus.

In his gloomy prison the young prince, his head bent over his loom, did not lose a moment. It was his devotion to his task, had he but known it, that saved him from despair, since it did not leave him time to reflect upon the horror of his situation. By the light of a smoky oil-lamp, he worked all day long, only stopping to eat his two slender meals, and continuing to toil until far into the night. When at length he fell asleep, broken with fatigue, he would awake to resume his labors the moment the first faint ray of dawn began to filter through the air-hole.

The thought of his young wife, of his family, of his

friends, often crossed his mind, and then he suffered cruelly. Yet at such times he would once more return to his work with a kind of rage, telling himself that every thread woven in his web, perhaps, brought him that much nearer to those whom he loved. He had, in fact, a secret hope in connection with this rug he was weaving with such marvelous speed, while thinking of his loved ones. "It is not for myself alone that I am working," he said to himself. "If my hope is realized, more than one unsuspecting victim will be saved from the terrible death which menaces him!"

Six months after his entry into the dungeon, the Sultan's son had at length completed a rug of vast dimensions, in whose weaving he had exhausted all his art, his good taste and his inventive powers. It was a splendid piece of work, glowing with the richest colors, and with gold and silver thread. He had taken good care to broider his name in the rug—for that it might catch the eye of someone who knew him was the hope he hid in his breast. He had even indicated the place in which he was held captive by means of a few words. All this he had done in the flourishing Arabic script which blended easily and gracefully with the arabesques of his fanciful design. Traced in a corner of the rug, with threads of neutral grey, these words were not likely to attract the attention of such ignorant wretches as the robbers.

"Here is a rug which should bring a high figure," the

prince told his jailers. "Sell it in the city to some pasha or, better still, to the Padishah himself, for he is a great lover of fine rugs! Above all do not sell it for less than a thousand *dinars* of gold!"

Soon two of the robbers, disguised as porters, left the tavern with the heavy rug on their shoulders, and began to walk the streets of Constantinople calling out that it was for sale. People crowded to examine it, and it excited general admiration; but the robbers could not find a single purchaser willing to pay a thousand gold *dinars* for a rug, no matter how beautiful it might be. At length the venders came to the Sultan's palace, went in, and were admitted into the Sultan's presence, for it was known that he was an admirer of fine rugs. The Sultan, in truth, was astonished at the beauty of the rug, and without any hesitation commanded that the price asked be paid for it. And when the robbers had the thousand golden *dinars* counted out to them, they went their way well content.

Then the Sultan had the rug spread out in one of the palace halls, and called together his whole family to admire it. The prince's young wife was there, too, still full of anguish because of the disappearance of her husband. It was with the liveliest emotion that she recognized the workmanship of the rug as being that in which the weavers of her native Kurdish village excelled, and the thought of him, who in order to please

her, had learned the weaver's trade, seized upon her more forcibly than ever.

"This rug," said she, "surely comes from my own country." And while one and another of the Sultan's family remarked upon the beauty of the workmanship, the wealth of agreeably blended colors and the ingenious fantasy of the designs, the young woman, forcing back her tears, examined the rug in silence.

It was not long before she had deciphered the letters, and then all the rest read them after her, and were stupefied at seeing the prince's name, as well as the mention of the tavern near the ancient bridge traced in the pattern.

"It is he!" said the princess in a trembling voice. "It is my husband who has broidered the inscription. He calls on us to help him!"

The Sultan asked why the prince had added the name of a tavern to his own.

"Some misfortune," replied the princess, "must have overtaken him at that place. Believe me, my Lord, he is calling us, and we should not lose a moment in going to his aid!"

Then the Sultan's younger son, the brother of the prince who had disappeared, remembered his having mentioned the tavern to him, but could not recall in what connection.

"All this is of no moment!" cried the Sultan. "My daughter-in-law is right. It is indeed the cry of my

son in his distress which the inscription brings us. His life is in danger. We must save it!"

At the Sultan's command, a company of janizaries was sent in all haste to the tavern near the ancient bridge, and arrived only a few moments after the two robbers had returned with the thousand *dinars* of gold. The tavern was at once surrounded, and the robbers, taken by surprise, were seized and bound before they even had time to think of defending themselves.

Then the janizaries forced the iron door by means of which the robbers entered the dungeon, and found the prince seated on the ground, where he was already beginning to weave a second rug. He was brought out into the open, and the people of Constantinople surrounded the pallid youth, dazzled by the light of day, with a compassion full of respect. The prince was ready to sink to the ground with emotion, at this sudden realization of the hopes he had so long nourished in secret. The people pitied him, they kissed his hands, and cursed his tormentors.

Soon the Sultan arrived, together with his daughter-in-law, his family and his court. It is easy to imagine his joy as he once more embraced his long-lost son. And after him the young wife pressed the prince so marvelously brought to light to her breast. The whole city wept with happiness.

"My dear wife," said the prince, when he had once more donned his rich robes of state, and mounted on a

white Arabian steed, was riding beside her litter, "I owe my life to you! The trade which I learned for love of you was my salvation. It preserved me from madness as well as death, and to-day it has brought me my deliverance!"

And while the robbers were haled away to be judged, the Sultan returned to his palace with his family, and commanded another seven-day festival of rejoicing at the expense of the imperial treasury.

THE FLOWER-FOOL OF TSIANG-LO

(A Chinese Tale)

NEVER believe, dear reader, that the intercourse between the Goddess of the Winds and the Flower Spirits is a fairy tale. Within the limits of the Four Seas and Nine Parts into which the earth is divided are many magical things, things never seen by eye nor heard by ear, nor yet written in the classical books. So many are there, in fact, that their number cannot be counted. It is claimed that Kung Fu-Tze has said nothing of miracles. Yet who so loves flowers, he shall be blessed, and who so injures them shortens his own life-span. Love of flowers is one of the virtues and not a fable. For those among you, dear readers, who do not believe this, I know a tale of a flower-watering old man who met a spirit-maiden at night, and this tale I shall tell you. And if there be among you one who already loves flowers, his love of flowers will be increased hereby. Yet if one of you who does not love flowers hear it, even he may learn to love them. At any rate the tale will while away time and beguile the wearisome hours.

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In the time of the Emperor In Tsung of the Sung dynasty, in the province of Kiang Nan, without the Eastern Gate of the provincial capital Ping Kiang, lay the village of Tsiang-Lo, about two miles distant from the city. In that village there lived an old man named Tschou Schian, the descendant of a peasant family, who possessed a few acres of land and a house. His wife had died without leaving him any children. Now from his youth on Tschou Schian had been passionately fond of growing flowers and planting fruit-trees, and later he gave up farming altogether, and lived only for this, his favorite occupation. If by some chance he obtained a flower of special value he was no less happy, nay, even more so than if a treasure of pearls had fallen into his lap. If, while busied with anything of importance, it happened that he came across beautiful flowers or trees underway, he was quite unconcerned as to whether or no their owner would let him look at them or not, but straightway went up to him and with smiling face begged to be allowed to examine them. If they were plants commonly met with, or such as he himself had in his own garden, whose blooms were exactly like his own, he might not stay so long. But if they were flowers of a rarer kind which he did not possess, or, possessing them they had already bloomed, they would drive all important matters from his mind; he could not tear himself away from them, and would let the whole day pass without

thinking of going home. Hence they called him the "Flower Fool." When he met a dealer who carried with him beautiful flowers, he never stopped to consider whether or no he had any money with him, and he let none such pass without buying from him. If he had no money about him, he pawned his clothes, and thus obtained the purchase price. Many flower dealers, who knew his ways, set a higher price on their wares; but this did not deter Tschou from buying. Evil men who were aware of his love for flowers hunted up the loveliest to be found, broke them off and surrounded the wound with earth in order to mock his folly. Yet he bought even these. And, strange to say, no matter what he might plant, it would thrive. In the course of time his plot of land had become one great garden, surrounded by a bamboo fence, upon which the most variegated climbing plants lost themselves in a green wilderness. Below the hedge grew all sorts of bushes and shrubs, and about the tree-trunks twined a thousand different kinds of clambering vines, and so manifold were their flowers that it would have been impossible to have counted the various species. Whenever they bloomed they seemed like a curtain of embroidered silk. Wherever one trod appeared a wonderful shrub or a rare expanse of blossom, and no sooner had one bloom begun to fade than others were opening in its stead. Toward the south lay a gate of woven boughs, to which led a footpath planted on either side with

bamboo, also guarded by two rows of a plaited evergreen hedge. In the background stood a little house with three rooms and a roof of grass. In spite of its grass roof, however, the house was high and airy, bright and sunny. In the middle room, against the wall, was a painting without writing, and also a white wooden bench, upon which to rest, and a few tables and chairs, all clean and well-cared for like the floor, on which not a speck of dust was to be seen. The rooms lying to the rear of this one the Flower-Fool used as bedrooms. Round about there were only flowers, as though the four seasons never changed here, and eternal spring reigned around the house. Before the eastern gate to the garden and directly opposite to it, lay the great lake whose waterscape, through all changes of season, in clear or in rainy weather, always spread in richest natural beauty. Tschou Schian had built a dam on the shore of the lake, and had planted it lavishly with peach-trees and willows, so that whenever spring came, everything glowed in stripes of red and green, and with a beauty which well-nigh equalled the splendor of the Western Sea. Moon-flowers grew in the river, but the lake bore water-roses of five colors, whose fragrance, at the time when the water-roses blossom, floated in colored clouds above the surface of the lake, and bedewed the skin of human beings with a sweet-smelling odor. Little boats sped to and fro over the water, and the song of the water-plant seekers rang

pleasantly across the waves. When a breath of wind arose, they ran races with each other, using sails and oars, and the lake was covered with a flying medley of crossing boats. Under the willow-trees the fishermen dried their nets, many of them played with their children, others repaired the torn or wornout meshes; others again lay sleeping aboardship or were holding swimming races, and the air was full of human speech and laughter. Those who wished to admire the water-roses came in handsomely decorated boats, with festival music, and so many were there of them that the boats lay close beside each other, like the scales on a fish. Then, when evening came and they turned to steer homeward, one could see ten thousand lights mingling with the sparks of the fire-flies and the glimmering reflections of the stars, so that it was impossible to tell one from the other. Yet, when the Autumn wind began to blow, the oak-woods gradually grew red, and on the green and yellow meadows by the shore the faded willow-leaves and moon-flowers were mingled. All kinds of water-plants cast their shadows on the water, and among the reeds the cranes hid themselves in flocks, and uttered their sad calls. Finally, when winter had come, heavy clouds, one after another, covered the skies: it began to snow and the earth and the heavens seemed to merge in one uniform and endless hue. Ah, who may describe the beauty of the four seasons on the lake in mere words!

It was Tschou Schian's custom when he rose every

morning, carefully to sweep together the leaves which might have fallen from the trees. Then he drew water and watered every single plant, and this he did a second time when evening came. If a flower was about to bloom that day his joy passed all bounds. He would boil tea, bow before the flower, pour a little of the tea on the ground, and call out three times in succession: "May you live three thousand years!" Then he would seat himself in the shade of the flowering plant, drink soberly and test the liquid with his tongue. When the tea he had drunk had made him feel good-humored, he would sing a song; but if he were weary he would choose a stone for a pillow and lie down unconcernedly beside the tree-trunk. And from the opening of the first bud to its standing in full bloom he would not leave the tree for a single moment. If the sun burned too fiercely he would take a broom, dip it in water and sprinkle the blossoms with it. When the moon shone he would pass the whole night without sleeping. But if it stormed or rained he would go out among the trees and flowers in his mantle of reeds and his hat of woven rushes, and look everywhere to see that nothing happened to them. If no more than a little twig had been bent he would raise it again with a bamboo staff. For all it was dark night he would rise to look after his plants, and did so several times during the night. When a blossom began to fade he would sigh long and often, and sometimes would shed tears. Since he could

not bear to fling away the fallen blossom-petals, he swept them lightly together with a broom, picked them up and laid them on a plate. Sometimes he would play with them, or regard them thoughtfully, until they had entirely withered. Then he would put them into a vase and when it was full, drink and pray sadly, as though he could not bear to part with them, and thereupon bury the vase deep in the earth of the dam. This he called the Burial of the Flowers. If the blossom-petals had been beaten down by the rain and been sullied by the earth, he would first wash them in luke-warm water, and then strew them over the lake. This he called the Bath of the Flowers.

He greatly disliked to see any one bend down a branch and pluck a flower. For he said: "Every flower blooms but once in the course of a year, and lives only during one of the four seasons. Yet even of that season she may claim but a few days, and she survives three other seasons for the sake of her few fleeting moments of beauty! Does she not dance when the wind blows, and does she not smile at people as though she herself were a human being, living her happiest days? Suddenly she is plucked—could the flowers but speak they might tell us how they suffer! Even when she has come into her few days of existence, she is at first in bud and in the end must fade, and only the brief hours which lie between mark the glory of her blooming. Bees and butterflies injure her, birds and worms

peck and gnaw her, the sun withers, the rain beats down upon her, and the mists hide her. Man alone comes to her aid. Where is the heart that can pluck and break her without pity! And who can measure the tale of years and months which must pass before the seed becomes a seedling and the seedling grows into a tree? Is it not, then, a delight to look at the blossoms and inhale their fragrance? Must they be broken as well? It should be remembered that a blossom, once severed from its stem, can never return to its place. All those who pluck flowers select the most beautiful branch, or the one most densely covered with bloom, and place it in a vase on their table, either to do honor to guests, to heighten for a short time the pleasures of the banquet, or to adorn their womankind for a day. Who remembers that the guests can eat and drink and make merry under the branches themselves, and that human art suffices to produce ornaments for women? Every branch in a human hand is lost to its parent tree. Would it not be better to let it grow in delight, year after year? And think of the buds which are broken off together with the blossoms which have opened and must wither ere they bloom? They are like children who have died in tender years! And there are those who do not love flowers at all, who pluck them heedlessly and once plucked give them to any and every one, or else, without pity, fling them carelessly aside. These flowers resemble those unfortunates whom fate has mistreated,

and who are powerless to establish their rights. Could the flowers but speak—oh, what sorrowful tales they might tell us!”

Such were Tschou Schian's feelings with regard to flowers. In all his life he had never broken a branch or plucked a flower from its stem. If he chanced to be in a strange garden which contained flowers unknown to him, he would remain there all day long contemplating them. And if the owner of the garden wished to pluck a branch and give it to him, he would not accept it, thinking it sinful. If some one came to pick flowers and he noticed it, he would talk to him by the hour trying to dissuade him from his purpose. And if the other would not listen to him, he would kneel and plead with him to spare the flowers' life. Because of all this he was known as the Flower-Fool, though people realized how kind-hearted he really was, and often ceased their plucking and breaking of flowers at his request. Then he would thank them in the flowers' name. When he met boys who were on their way to pluck flowers in order to sell them, he would make them a present of as much as they might have sold them for, and would not let them approach the blooms. When a flower was broken during his absence, he would first mourn and then anoint the wound with a salve: this he called Curing the Flowers.

He seldom admitted people to his garden to admire his flowers; and when a relative or some good friend

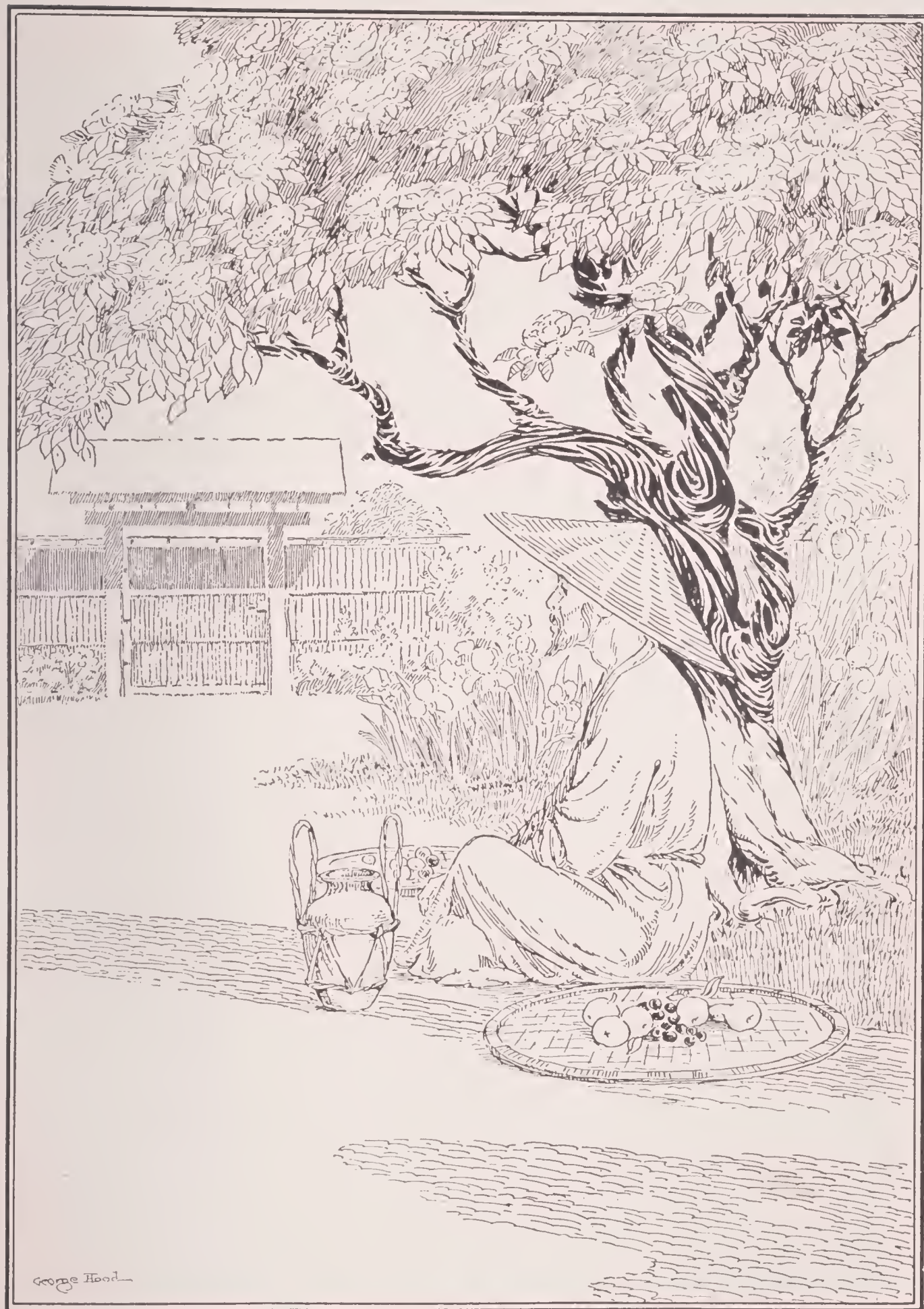
whom he could not refuse wanted in, he would not admit him until he had told him how fond of flowers he was. Fearing that the emanations of the body might injure them, he would only allow the plants to be admired from a distance, and permitted no one to examine them at close range. And if, despite all, some one broke a flower, the old man would fall into such a rage that his face would turn dark-red; he would begin to scold loudly and violently, and never again allow the offender to enter his garden gate. All the folk of the countryside knew his peculiarities, and none of them ventured to touch a single petal of his flowers or a single leaf on his trees. As is known, wherever many trees are growing together, birds like to build their nests, and where many flowers bloom even greater flocks of birds are wont to gather. If they were content to eat only of the fruits, the loss might be borne; but they love to nourish themselves with the young buds. For this reason Tschou Schian always strewed plenty of seed and grain on the ground, and prayed the birds not to injure his flowers. And who would have thought it: in his garden even the birds responded to his appeal. Day after day, when they had satisfied their hunger, they would fly slowly between the flowers or sit in the trees and sing, and never did they touch a bud or a blossom. Therefore the trees in the old man's garden bore more fruit than those in any other, and every fruit was large and sweet. As soon as the fruit had ripened,

he first prayed to the god of flowers, and not until he had done this did he venture to taste it. Then he would send fruit to all his neighbors to enjoy and what was left he sold, so that year by year he could lay aside a little money. The living gladness of the flowers had passed over to him and though more than fifty years of age, he was never weary or indolent. His muscles and sinews, in fact, seemed to increase in power. He drank only tea of an inferior quality and ate coarse food, and what he had over at the end of the year he gave to the poor of the village. Hence all the villagers honored him and politely called him: "Sir Tschou." He, however, called himself: "The Flower-Watering Ancient."

Now it chanced that at the time there was in the village a man from the nearest-lying town, by name of Djang We, the scion of a noble family. He was cruel and treacherous, and oppressed the whole countryside, for he was very powerful. Any one who even unknowingly offended him soon found himself in trouble. He was constantly surrounded by a crowd of servants resembling wolves and tigers, and a band of rude young men with whom he moved about day and night, committing all sorts of wild offenses. A number of families had already been ruined by this monster. One day, however, it chanced that he met another of his own kind who was even more savage than he, and by whom he was seized and beaten half to death. Then, when he took his plaint to court, he lost his case into the bargain.

So now he was wandering about in the village, which belonged to him, mad with rage, and in the immediate neighborhood of Tsiang-Lo. Once, after breakfast, when he was wandering about the village, he happened to stop before Tschou's garden, and noticed how fresh and charming the flowers looked in the garden hedge, and saw that in the garden flowers, trees and bushes were all in freest bloom. "Why, this is magnificent!" cried he. "To whom does this garden belong?" "It belongs to Tschou Schian, whom people call the Flower-Fool," replied his servant. "Yes, I have already heard that a certain Tschou Schian had planted many trees and flowers here," replied Djang We. "Since we're on the spot, however, why do we not enter and look at them?" "The man is peculiar," the servant explained, "he allows no one to examine his flowers." "Others he may not permit to enter," declared Djang We. "Would he dare to object in my case? Hasten and knock!"

It was just at the time of the peony blossoming. Tschou had just finished watering, and was seated alone among his flowers, with a jug of water and two platters of fruit, in order to enjoy his repose. Hearing a knock without, he set down his goblet and went to the gate. He at once thought: "They wish to enter to look at my flowers," spread out both his arms to close the entrance and asked: "What do you wish here?" "Do you not know me?" inquired Djang We. "I am



Tschou had just finished watering, and was seated alone among his flowers

the celebrated Sir Djang and the village of Djang is my property. I have been told that you have many beautiful flowers in your garden, and I have come here especially to look at them." "I have no beautiful flowers here," replied Tschou. "I have nothing but peaches, apricots and the like; and these, too, are already passed their season of bloom. At this time there are no other flowers here." Djang's eyes grew round. "This is maddening," he cried. "I have come here only to look at your flowers! What harm can that do? And you tell me you have none. Do you think I wish to eat them?" "I have not lied to you," answered Tschou, frightened, "there are really no flowers here." But Djang would not listen to him; he stepped forward, flung down Tschou's arms with a jerk, and thrust him in the breast so that he tottered to one side. Then he rushed into the garden with his companions. When Tschou saw that matters were taking an evil turn, there was nothing left for him to do, in spite of his anguish, but to let the intruders have their way. He locked the door behind them and followed them, stationing himself beside them. Djang's party now saw that the garden was full of manifold flowers and trees; but that none bloomed as splendidly as the peonies. For the peony is the queen among flowers, and the loveliest peonies to be found are those of Lo-Yang. There are yellow ones, called *Yo*, and violet ones known as *We*, and many another variety;

for they are manifold in name and color, and a single peony-tree costs as much as five-thousand silver taels. Yet if one should inquire why the peonies of Lo-Yang are the most precious of all, it is because of the Empress Wu Tsai Tien, who lived in the time of the Tang dynasty. She was extravagant, voluptuous and cruel, and had two favorites, Djang Je-Tse and Djang Tsiang-Tsung. One day in November she took it into her head to walk in the gardens of her palace and she issued an edict: "To-morrow at morn I wish to walk for my pleasure in the park of my palace. Let the message be sent broadcast with the swiftness of fire that spring is to appear everywhere! All the hundreds of varieties of flowers must blossom this night, and not wait until the wind of morning arise!" Since Wu Tsai Tien was a ruler divinely appointed to reign on earth by the Heavens, the flowers did not dare to act contrary to her command, and their buds grew and blossomed in the course of a single night. On the following morning the Empress was carried in her imperial litter into the park of her palace, and lo, thousands of red and ten thousands of violet flowers were in bloom, spreading abroad a blinding radiance. The peonies alone had been too proud to obey the Empress and her favorites, and they had not put forth even a single little green leaf. Then Wu Tsai Tien was angered, and banished the peonies to Lo-Yang, whence they have spread over all the world.

In Tschou Schian's garden the peonies had been planted directly opposite the little grass hut. They were surrounded by a low wall formed of stones brought up from the lake; a wooden structure had been set up for their support; and a cloth cover had been stretched over it to protect it from the sun. The trees were more than a *djang* in height, and even the lowest branches stood six to seven feet from the ground. Their blooms were as large as saucers, and there were some of five colors, so beautifully mingled that their splendor dazzled the eye. Djang We's followers were full of praise, and he himself at once climbed upon the wall in order to inhale their fragrance. Since Tschou could not suffer this he said to Djang We: "Please, do not approach them so closely!" Djang We, already irritated because he had not been freely admitted to the garden, was only looking for some pretext for a quarrel. When he heard these words, he turned and cursed the old man. "You live in my neighborhood! Is it possible that you do not know my name? Here all is full of the most beautiful flowers, and you tell me you have none. And instead of being glad that I said no more about it, you dare to continue your impudent speeches. What harm can it do the blossoms if I smell them? Seeing the way in which you carry on I am only the more inclined not to cease." With that he bent down bloom after bloom and smelled of it. Tschou Schian stood beside him and did not venture to oppose him, for he thought

that once Djang We had seen the flowers he would go. But the latter was intentionally trying to exasperate the old man and said: "Who could look at such lovely flowers without drinking a flagon of the juice of the grape!" At once he commanded his servants to bring it him. When Tschou Schian saw that preparations were in progress for a festival his rage increased. "My house," said he, "is like a shell, there is no room in it to sit down! Look at the flowers, but drink when you have returned home again." "There is plenty of room here for us to seat ourselves," said Djang We, and pointed to the ground. "The ground is dirty, you will not wish to sit there," replied Tschou. "What difference does that make?" asked Djang We. "We will spread out rugs."

In a short time food and drink had been brought, and the intruders, spreading rugs, seated themselves in a ring, drank, played and amused themselves, while Tschou Schian sat and watched them with a worried countenance. And when Djang We saw the trees and flowers in all their beauty and splendor, an evil thought came into his mind, and with glistening eyes he spoke to Tschou. "For all that you look so old and silly, you really know how to plant trees and flowers. There is a goblet for you. I make you a present of it!" "I am not accustomed to drink," said Tschou angrily, "drink it yourself!" "Would you like to sell this garden?" now inquired Djang We. When Tschou heard these

words he knew that some evil was underway. Said he: "This garden is my life, how could I permit myself to sell it?" "Life or no life," cried Djang We, "sell me the garden and once you have done so, you need do nothing but tend the garden. What more would you want?"

"You are lucky, old man," the servants now said. "If Sir Djang condescends to look at matters this way you should hasten to thank him." Tschou saw that they were trying to drive him step by step into their net; excitement so overcame him that his hands and feet seemed to wither and die. When he returned no answer Djang We said: "This old man is enough to drive one mad! It is for him to say whether or no he will sell his garden. Why does he not answer?" "I have already told you I would not sell it," replied Tschou, "so why ask me again?" "Do not babble nonsense," replied Djang We. "If I hear another word about your not selling the garden, I shall write a letter to send you before the judge!" Tschou Schian's rage had now reached its climax, and he was tempted to tell Djang We what he thought of him. Yet he reflected that Djang We had power and influence. He could not meet him on equal terms. So he decided to bide his time, get him out of the way temporarily, and wait and see what might develop. "Sir," said he, choking down his rage, "if you wish to buy the garden let us discuss it quietly. How can we come to any decision in a single

talk?" "Very well," said the other, "you may be right, so we will wait until to-morrow."

The whole company now rose; the servants clearing up the dishes and being the first to depart. Since Tschou Shian feared they might injure the flowers, he placed himself before them to protect them. Djang We in the meantime, had climbed the peony-wall and, no matter what the cost, decided to break a blossom. "Sir!" cried Tschou Schian, clutching him, "for all that a flower is but a tiny creature, who knows what pains it has cost to bring forth its few blossoms? Does it not hurt you to break them? In another day or two they will have faded, so why commit this sin, this shameful act?" "You are babbling nonsense again," answered Djang We. "What do you mean by sin and shame? When you sell the garden to-morrow it is mine. I could break off all the blossoms if I had a mind to do so, and what business would it be of yours?" He tried to break from Tschou's grasp, but the latter clung to him all the more closely and cried: "Even though you slay me I will not suffer you to break a single bloom!" "In truth," said the others, "the old fellow is a queer sort. A single bloom—what difference does it make? He looks at us as though we ought to be afraid of him, and thinks we will stop breaking flowers as the whim strikes us, just on his account!" And with that they at once began to break the blooms. Tschou, filled with anguish, screamed loudly. He loosed his hold on Djang We,

and tried his utmost to keep the others away from the blooms. But unfortunately he exposed one side to attack as soon as he ran to defend the other, and in a short time most of the blooms had been torn from the boughs.

"You evildoers!" cried Tschou in an agony. "You come to one who has never done you any harm, in order to wound and insult him. Of what value is life to me now!" With that he went to Djang We and butted him in the breast with his head. So furious was his assault that Djang We fell to the ground. "He has injured our master," the others now cried, and turned against Tschou Schian to beat him. Yet among them were a few more sensible than the rest who, seeing that Tschou was an old man, feared that he might be beaten to death, and persuaded the others to leave him and raise their master from the ground. Djang We, still more enraged by his fall, now beat down all the blooms, and still unsatisfied, stamped violently on those already lying on the ground. Then Tschou Schian's anguish grew so intolerable that he flung himself on the earth, and cried so pitifully that the sound of grief rose to the heavens.

When the neighbors noticed that a quarrel was going on in the garden, the people flocked together and saw the ground covered, far and near, with blossoms and leaves. Djang's band was about to fling itself upon Tschou in order to beat him, when the neighbors, very much alarmed, interposed, calmed the rascals, and inquired as to the reason of the scene. Among the neigh-

bors, were also some tenants of Djang We, who begged him to excuse Tschou Schian. As the gathering people gradually dispersed, passing out through the garden gate, Djang We said to the neighbors: "Tell the old thief that if he makes me a present of the garden in a polite speech, nothing further shall happen to him. Yet if he even attempt to utter the word 'No,' then he may watch out for what shall take place." The neighbors paid little attention to what he said at the time, but returned, raised Tschou Schian from the ground and placed him on the steps. The old man, however, continued to wail and seemed to be devoured by grief. The neighbors comforted him, bade him adieu and locked the garden gate for him. Some of them declared that though the old man had never allowed people to look at his flowers, perhaps after this quarrel he would act differently. Others declared that this should not be said, since the proverb runs: "Care for flowers a year and you will see them for ten days!" People only knew that flowers were fair to look upon, but they gave no thought to the time and pains he who tended them sacrificed. "Is it then surprising that the old man loves his flowers so madly?" they asked.

Tschou Schian in the meantime could not bear to let the blossoms lie on the ground. He picked them up and found them all much broken and trodden underfoot. His grief again overcame him, and his tears began to flow anew as he said: "Flowers, dear flowers,

never have I injured the very least of your petals! Who would have thought that so sad a fate would overtake you!" While he was still weeping a voice behind him spoke: "Tschou, why do you lament so bitterly?" As he turned he saw that the speaker was a maiden of sixteen, fair and delicate in face and figure, clad in a simple yet costly robe. He did not know to which household she might belong, but wiped away his tears and queried: "Maiden, which is your household and what do you desire?" "I live near by," replied she. "They told me the peonies in your garden were in fullest bloom, so I came here especially to see them. I would not have thought that they had already faded and fallen." When his peonies were thus once more recalled to Tschou Schian, his tears began to flow again unconsciously. "What grieves you," asked the maiden, "so that you are continually weeping?" Then Tschou Schian told her of his adventure with Djang We. "If that be the case," laughed the maiden, "tell me, would you like to see your blossoms on their branches again?" "You are jesting, maiden," replied Tschou Schian. "How is it possible for the blossom which has fallen to regain its bough?" "I have inherited a means from my ancestors, known as 'Bring-Blossom-to-Twig,' " replied the maiden. "It is one I have often tried and it has never failed me yet." Then Tschou Schian's sorrow was turned to joy. "Is this true, maiden?" he cried. "Why should it not be true?" replied she. Then Tschou

Schian flung himself down on his knees before her and said: "If you care to give me a little share of your wonderful secret I have no way of thanking you. Yet I will always call you to me as often as a flower blooms, so that you may enjoy the sight. "Do not kneel," said the girl, "but go and fetch me a goblet of water." Tschou Schian rushed away to fetch the water, still filled with lively doubts; but when he returned with it the maiden had vanished. The blossoms, however, were once more on the tree branches, and not a single one was lying on the ground. Originally each had but a single color, yet as he now saw them they seemed to have changed, and were striped with red and violet. Each tree bore blossoms of five different colors, and they were fresher and more beautiful than before. Tschou Schian was happy and very much surprised. "Who could have imagined," he said, "that the maiden truly possessed such a wonderful charm!" Thinking that she must still be standing somewhere behind the trees, he set down the water, intending to thank her. But though he searched the whole garden, her shadow lay nowhere on the grass. "I will surely find her if I look by the gate, and will go there and ask her to teach me her magic charm." He went to the gate which was still locked, and saw two old men of the neighborhood, Yu and Schien, sitting there and watching the fishermen dry their nets. When they saw Tschou come out they rose and said to him: "We heard that Djang We

had carried on in your garden in an evil manner. As we were in the fields we could not come until now to inquire about the matter." "Do not remind me of that evildoer, who has treated me so unjustly," said Tschou. "I must thank a maiden who saved my blossoms by a magic charm. Yet I have been unable to thank her for she has disappeared. Did you notice in which direction she went?" When the two ancients heard this they were much surprised: "How can it be," they asked, "that the broken blooms are on their branches again? When did the maiden leave?" "This very minute," replied Tschou. "We have been sitting here a long time," said the neighbors, "but no one has passed. How then could we have seen this maiden?" Then Tschou Schian's heart trembled. "If it be as you say," he said, "then perhaps it is a spirit who came to earth." "Tell us," the old men insisted, "what did she do to save the flowers?" When Tschou Schian had told them all, they were still more surprised and wished to see the miracle with their own eyes. So they went together with him and stood before the trees. "In truth it must have been a spirit!" they cried, overcome with astonishment. At once Tschou prepared a jug of wine and poured a sacrifice to the maiden in the heavens. "You have always loved the flowers so tenderly and so deeply," the two old men now said, "that a spirit descended from the skies because of it. Djang We will be overwhelmed with shame when he sees the flowers

blossoming again to-morrow." "Let be," answered Tschou Schian, "such a being is like a vicious dog. One should be on one's guard against him even at a distance. Why do you speak of him?" "Yes, you are right," declared the ancients. Thereupon Tschou, in the fullness of his joy, would not let the two depart, but drank tea with them beneath the flowers until evening had come. Only then did the ancients depart, and soon told the tale of the miracle to all, so that it spread throughout the village. On the following morning all would have liked to have gone to the garden to view the wonder, but they feared Tschou would not permit it. How could they have known that Tschou Schian had long been considering the idea of himself becoming a spirit, and now that one had come to him, had decided to allow the world to sink beneath his feet? All night long he had not slept, but had sat beneath the trees, reflecting that the adventure with Djang We had only occurred because of his narrow-heartedness, for which it was a punishment. Once free and lofty in mind and heart as the spirits are, and like them capable of supporting anything, what more could happen to him? On the following morning he unlocked the gate and allowed the curious to enter the garden and wander about in it as they chose. He had but just opened the gate when some came up to inquire. They saw Tschou Schian sitting by his peonies and he said to them: "Come, if you wish, and look. Only break none of my

blossoms." And when they heard this they spread the news broadcast, and men and women, young and old, came crowding up to wonder and admire.

In the meantime Djang We rose from his couch at an early hour and said to his followers: "Yesterday the old man cast me to the ground, but I shall not endure this insult. Either let him give me the garden now or we will go there and break all the trees to pieces." "You will not miss obtaining the garden," they replied, "you need not fear a refusal on his part. Yet it would have been better if we had not beaten down all the blossoms yesterday, but had left a few to delight our eyes." "Why should that worry us?" said Djang We. "They will bloom again next year. Now let us hasten, before the old man has time to prepare to resist us." But when they came forth from their village, they heard that a spirit had been in Tschou Schian's garden, and that all his blossoms were in place, and more beautiful in their varied colors than before. Djang We could not believe his ears. "Why should a spirit put herself out for that old fellow?" he said. "And if so, why did she wait until we had torn down the blossoms? Does he keep spirits in his house? He is afraid of us, and has invented this story in order to frighten us." And the others all cried: "Indeed, you are right, Your Honor!" Soon they were standing before the garden gate through which the people were streaming in and out, all telling the same tale. "Is such a thing pos-

sible?" asked Djang We's followers. "Have no fear," their master told them. "No matter what spirits haunt the garden, I intend to possess it." So in they went and reaching the little grass hut found that the tale was a true one. In his heart and soul Djang We was very much surprised, yet his greed to possess himself of the garden was not lessened. A malicious thought came to him and turning on his heel he said to his followers: "Let us go for the present!" When they had left the garden his companions asked him why he had made no inquiries. So he told them, "I have an idea. Say nothing to Tschou about it, and to-morrow the garden will be mine." Of course they wanted to know what he had planned. "You know," said Djang We, "that not long since the sorcerer Wang Tsai has put himself at the head of a rebellion, and that the authorities have sent orders throughout the land to seize the sorcerer and his fellow rebels. A reward of three thousand taels has been offered those who can point out any of the magician's followers. What clearer evidence of sorcery is there than the blossoms which have returned to their boughs? Djang Pa shall go to town and report that the old man is inciting the villagers to rebellion. If he cannot endure the torture, he will confess and be cast into prison. The garden will be sold by the state, yet none but myself will dare buy it, and both the garden and the three thousand taels will then be mine."

Djang Pa at once went to town, and reported Tschou

Schian as agreed. As soon as he heard that all the villagers had witnessed the magic transformation which had taken place in the old man's garden, the mandarin sent his servants to the garden, where they seized old Tschou Schian, bound him with cords and dragged him off. Djang We, as soon as he had been taken away, went to the garden, locked it up, and then followed the servants of the court. Poor Tschou Schian was thunderstruck when the judge, before whom he was brought, accused him of trying to incite his friends and neighbors to rebellion by magic means. But when the judge asked him, "Did you not, in the course of the past few days, cause the blossoms which had fallen from your trees to return to the boughs by sorcery? Can you deny this?" he knew that Djang We had misled the magistrate. The latter, however, would not believe the Flower Fool's explanations and, angered by what he thought was the old man's obstinacy, threatened to put him to the torture.

At the moment he did so, however, he was suddenly seized by a fainting spell, so that he nearly fell from the bench. So unwell did he feel that he gave orders for Tschou Schian to be taken to prison, and that the matter of questioning him be deferred until the following day.

So they led the old man off to prison. He wept bitterly, and as he passed Djang We remarked: "When was I ever your enemy that you treat me with such

cruelty?" To this Djang We made no reply and went off with Djang Pa and his friends. But old Nur Yu and Schien, who had accompanied Tschou Schian, promised to bring the judge a letter signed by all the folk in the village on the morrow, asking for his release. And then Tschou Schian was led to jail.

That night, as he lay in deep sorrow on his pallet, lost in gloomy thoughts, he suddenly sensed that the spirit was near him. "Save me, great spirit!" he cried quickly. And though he could not see the spirit-maiden he heard her laugh and then she asked: "Would you like to escape from your difficulties?" A wave of her hand, and his chains fell from him and then, drawing near her, he humbly asked her name. "I am a guardian Flower Spirit," she replied, "sent by the Queen-Mother of the South-Western Heavens. Since your heart was so kind I took pity on you and allowed your blossoms to grow once more on the trees. To-morrow you shall go free, for Djang We has offended the flowers and deceived his fellowmen. The Flower-God has already reported what has happened to the Lord of the Heavens, and Djang We's punishment has been decreed. You, however, have spent all your time so virtuously that in a few years I shall help you to become one of the immortals. If henceforward you eat nothing but flower-petals your body will grow so light that it will float into the heavens like down." And then she showed him how the flower-petals should be eaten.

Tschou Schian knelt before her to thank her, and when he rose she had disappeared.

He looked about him and saw the maiden standing high on the prison wall beckoning him upward with her hand, and calling, "Come along!" And Tschou Schian began to climb the wall, yet no matter how hard he tried he could not get beyond the middle of the wall. He felt himself growing heavier and heavier and realized that he could climb no further. Suddenly the sound of a gong fell on his ear and a voice cried: "The sorcerer has fled! Up, we must seek him!" He was frightened, his hands trembled, his feet seemed like lead, and he dropped heavily from the wall to the ground. At this very moment he woke, and saw that he was still lying on his pallet. Meditating upon his dream he came to the conclusion that all would yet turn out for the best.

When Djang We saw that the judge was treating Tschou Schian as a sorcerer, his delight over the success of his plan knew no bounds, and he said: "The old man was always a queer old chap. But to-day he lies in jail and cannot prevent us from enjoying ourselves in his garden to our hearts' content." His companions all applauded him, and having sent servants to town to bring food and drink, Djang We entered the garden with them. They went straight to the little grass hut and suddenly Djang We noticed that not a single peony was left on its stalk. The blossoms once more lay scattered

about the ground, just as when he had first cut them down. His companions were surprised, but Djang We said: "Well, perhaps the old man could work magic, else how could the blossoms have changed place in the space of half a day!" Said one of his friends, "it may be that he knew we would come here to look at the flowers, and has enchanted them in order to annoy us." But Djang We replied, "If the blossoms were stricken from the trees by magic, we will drink a toast to them now they lie on the ground!" So they spread rugs out on the earth, made themselves comfortable and passed the flowing bowl until late in the afternoon. It was then that a violent whirlwind suddenly rose and raised all the peony blossoms from the ground. In the twinkling of an eye they were changed into tiny little girls, not one of them more than a foot high. "What does this mean?" cried the terrified Djang We and his companions. No sooner had they spoken than the girls, in the midst of the whirling wind, grew in height, as though the latter had blown them larger, and then it was plain that they were all delicate and beautiful in shape, and gleaming in enchantingly colored garments. They surrounded the band of evildoers, who, blinded by their beauty, stared at them without a word. Then one of the girls, clad in a red robe, spoke to her companions and said: "Dear Sisters, this garden has been our dwelling-place for the past ten years, during which time Tschou has ever cared for us and protected us in

the tenderest manner. Who could have thought that these evil men would injure us so cruelly? By their deceitful wiles Tschou Schian has been cast into prison, and now they wish to take possession of his garden. The enemy stands before us. Should we not strike him with all the power we have in gratitude to Tschou Schian?" The others replied: "You are right, Dear Younger Sister! Let us begin quickly before our enemy escapes!" No sooner had they spoken than they began to wave their sleeves, several feet in breadth, like the sails of a wind-mill, and the icy breeze which came from them bit deep into flesh and bone. "Spirits!" cried Djang We and his evil companions, and ran about in the maddest confusion, none seeing or heeding the others. Some were torn and scratched by the boughs of the trees, others stumbled and fell, rose and tripped again; and so great was their confusion that only after some time had passed did they venture to stand still. When the members of the party were counted all were there save Djang We and Djang Pa. The storm had ceased and evening had come. All covered their heads with their hands and slunk away as quietly as mice. After a time, when they had somewhat recovered, they brought some field laborers with them and returned to the garden to seek Djang We and Djang Pa.

When they came to the big apricot-tree, they heard a loud cry and raising their lanterns saw Djang Pa

lying there. He had stumbled over a projecting tree-root and had seriously injured his head. Since he could not rise, he was placed in a litter and taken away while the search for Djang We was continued. It was quiet now in the garden: the thousand and one noises of the day seemed to be slumbering. When they passed the peony-trees they saw that the blossoms were once more in place, and that not a petal lay on the ground. In the little hut of grass, beakers and flagons were scattered about, and in fear and trembling some cleared away the broken china, while others continued their search for Djang We. And yet, although the garden was not large and they had already crossed and recrossed it in all directions, there was no trace of Djang We to be seen. Had the spirits destroyed him or the wind blown him away? Finally, since he could by no means be found, there was nothing left to do but to return and wait until morning and then seek once more.

As they were leaving the garden gate, however, several persons bearing lanterns drew near. Among them were old Yu and Schien. They had heard the tale of the spirits, and that Djang We could nowhere be found and had not known what to make of it. So they had set out with several neighbors to look into the matter themselves. "Do not go back yet," they said to Djang We's servants. "We will help you search once more!" The servants were willing, and once more every nook and corner of the garden was searched,

but all in vain. At last, when Djang We's servants were about to leave, and the two old men had decided to close the garden door, one of the field hands cried out from a corner by the eastern wall: "Here lies our master!" Like bees, all flew to the spot, and the field hand said: "Is not that our master's soft hat hanging on the bough of yonder tree?" "If the hat be there, the owner cannot be far away," replied the others. They brought the light of the lanterns to bear upon the wall, and a few steps farther on, from a ditch into which offal was cast, they saw two human feet stretching up toward the sky. Djang We's servants recognized their master's boots, and knew that the feet must be his. With great labor and effort they managed to draw the body out of the ditch and the following day, after his relatives had been notified, it was buried. Nor did Djang Pa survive his injuries.

The day after, when the circumstances attending the deaths of Djang We and Djang Pa had been explained to the judge, and more than a hundred inhabitants of Tsiang-Lo appeared to testify to Tschou Schian's love for flowers and his blameless life, he was at once freed. On his return to the village the neighbors gave festivals in his honor, which he returned, and all was gaiety and merriment.

Yet from that time onward Tschou Schian went without food, and eating only the petals of the fallen blossoms, gave all the money which came from the sale of

his fruit for the benefit of the poor. In the course of a few years his white hair grew black again, and a new youth smoothed the wrinkles from his face. One day when the festival of Midautumn was celebrated in the middle of August, beneath a radiant sun, without the faintest cloud in ten thousand miles of purest azure sky, Tschou Schian was sitting among his flowers. And of a sudden the fortune-bearing wind began to blow, piling up colored clouds in the air like rolling vapor, out of which sounded a sweet music of pipes and flutes. A wonderful fragrance filled the atmosphere, blue phœnixes and white storks flew and danced in the air, and gradually sank down to the garden. And on one cloud sat the Guardian Spirit of the Flowers, who had been sent by the Queen Mother of the South-Western Skies, and at either side of her moved two files of bearers of banners and embroidered parasols in multicolored garb, while some of the parasol-bearers made music on different kinds of instruments. When Tschou Schian became aware of them, he cast himself down on his knees before the Flower Spirit. And the latter said: "Your virtue has now reached its highest point, and I have reported it to the Lord of the Heavens. He bestows upon you the name of Protector of the Flowers; you are to be the future ruler of all the flowers on earth, and are now to take flight up to the heavens. And if a human being loves flowers then you must grant him blessings, but if he despises

and injures them you must do justice upon him.” Tschou Schian thanked her, and entered the cloud together with the other spirits. Then the grass hut and the flowers slowly rose in the air and followed him, all turning to the South. Yu and Schien, and the other villagers who beheld this flung themselves to the ground. And quite plainly they could see Tschou Schian stretching out a hand in greeting to them as the cloud gradually disappeared. In later years the village of Tsiang-Lo, for this reason, came to be known as the Village of the Spirit Ascension or the Village of the Hundred Flowers.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

(A Japanese Tale)

ONCE upon a time, on the island of Miya Jima, where the yellow sand is strewn with rosy shells at ebb-tide, and the pine trees lean away from the wild sea wind, there lived an old, old wood-chopper named Yoshida, with his aged wife Foumi. They were loved and respected by all the inhabitants of their village, for they had dwelt together for sixty years in faithful and tender affection.

In the early days of their marriage, Yoshida had been a strong and powerfully-built youth, with keen black eyes, and a heavy shock of hair, which he wore wound in a knot on his head. Foumi was graceful, her long lashes slightly raised toward her temples, and her white, oval face would color like a peony when she blushed. Yoshida was not rich enough to clothe her in costly brocades, but on feast days she looked charming in her modest gray gown, with its girdle, on which silver chrysanthemums were embroidered on a brown ground.

Foumi, before she married Yoshida, had heard tell that man's heart was as changeable as the autumn leaf. So she had made up her mind to gain her husband's

affection by unwearied patience and changeless tenderness. And she was so successful that Yoshida's fondness for her only increased with the passing years.

Their three sons had become fishermen. They drove their boats out into the deep rolling sea and cast their nets, and drew fish broad of fin and narrow of fin out of the cold, clear waters. Yet one day they did not return, and Yoshida and Foumi knew that Shiko-Tschuchi-no-Kami, the Lord of the Sea Salt, had called them down to his great palace of fish scales beneath the wave, to wait on him at the banquets to which all the fish of the sea brought sweetmeats in vessels of coral, jade-stone and gold. So, though they mourned them, they knew they were happy, and every day laid offerings of rice, flowers or fruit on the little altar before Shiko-Tschuchi-no-Kami's shrine.

And now, both Yoshida and Foumi had grown very old, and resembled those venerable sea-tortoises which are said to live for centuries. Yoshida was wrinkled and dried up, his back was bowed, and his limbs trembled. Foumi had become quite small, and the skin clung to her bones. Nevertheless, Yoshida still went into the forest from time to time, and cut a small tree; and Foumi kept the house neat and clean. And every day, in spring, she placed three branches of flowering cherry in the bronze vase before the little image of their favorite household god. He was a funny little god, with a long beard and a high bonnet, and held a long

pilgrim's staff in one hand. His name was Foukourokoujou, and he was supposed to be a god of happiness, and to protect the aged.

But happiness, alas, is hard to find! Now that Yoshida and Foumi had grown old, they sighed for their lost youth, and Foumi, in particular, would say, "Why cannot we grow young again? How wonderful life would be then."

"I would have all my former strength to use the axe," Yoshida would reply.

"And I," Foumi would add, "could move easily and quickly about the house. We would have long years before us, and our days would be full of happiness."

With these thoughts on their mind they grew more and more sad, day by day. And the little god Foukourokoujou noticed their sadness. He could restore their youth to them, yet this would be contrary to the laws which govern human existence. So, instead, he determined to cure them of their vain regrets.

* * * * *

One fine autumn day, Yoshida awoke before the gray dawn and turned to rise, and seeing that Foumi still slept, decided to shut his own eyes once more. Yet an inner voice seemed to call to him, saying, "Rise, the day is beginning to break, and you are strongest in the freshness of morning! Take your axe and go to the forest. It is possible that a pleasant surprise awaits you there."

And without a clear idea of what he was doing, Yoshida obeyed. He rose without waking Foumi, and taking his axe set out for the forest.

While he walked the dawn rose softly up, like a prayer, and when he reached the forest it was day. And there he saw something which surprised him mightily. Never before, at the entrance to the forest, had he noticed the magnificent maple-tree which now towered there, and whose leaves, painted by the autumn, shone in scarlet beauty against the sombre green of the pines. And even greater was his surprise to behold for the first time in this spot so well known to him, a beautiful crystal spring, gushing forth in marvellous clarity from a natural basin of rock.

Attracted by the celestial blue of the running water, he took up a few drops in the hollow of his hand and drank.

Wonder of wonders! Bending over the water, as clear and unbroken as a mirror, he saw himself transformed. His hair once more was black, there was not a wrinkle on his face. He stood upright and new strength seemed to swell his muscles. He was young once more, as he had been at twenty. Without knowing it, he had drunk of the Fountain of Youth, whose true spring is in Horaizun the Blest, where birds with blue and gold feathers sing eternally in the tree-tops.

Robust, smiling, glad in his new-found strength, Yoshida hastened home, and as he entered the house

Foumi awoke. Seeing a handsome young man enter she uttered a cry of surprise; then, looking at him more carefully, he seemed familiar to her and, suddenly, remembering her husband as he had looked twenty years before, she was motionless with astonishment, and wondered whether she had lost her mind.

Yoshida soon reassured her. He told her what he had seen and what he had done, and she began to laugh and weep with joy. Without losing a moment she, too, would seek out the miraculous fountain, and when she returned, she would once more be as graceful and lovely as she had been at twenty. Ah, what long years of untroubled happiness they now could look forward to passing together! No, Yoshida need not go with her, she said, and with hurried steps she disappeared in the direction of the forest.

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For a time Yoshida patiently waited for Foumi to come back. But soon time began to grow long to him, and he walked impatiently about the room. Foumi did not return. Finally, he left the house and looked toward the forest, but could not see her on the path which led to it.

Yoshida began to feel alarmed. At last, no longer able to control the dim forebodings which rose in his mind, he ran toward the forest.

He came once more to the beautiful maple-tree with its scarlet leaves, and again heard the soft murmur of

the fountain, mingling with the sigh of the wind through the pines. He saw the limpid blue water, still gushing from the rock, but not a sign of his companion. He searched round about the spring, and when he returned to the maple-tree had not yet discovered a trace of her. She seemed to have vanished, without a sign, and his heart grew more and more alarmed.

Suddenly, a strange sound fell on his ear. It was a vague wail, like the plaint of a wounded animal. Led by this sound, the wood-chopper took a few steps and then stopped, dumbfounded. There, in the high grass, lay a little girl baby, who seemed to be no more than a few months old, and whose arms were stretched out to him in despairing appeal.

He took up the little one, examined her attentively, and looked into her eyes. What strange eyes! They held a world of recollections, of thoughts, and seemed to be making a great effort to express something which the child wished to make him understand, yet could not tell him. "Where," thought Yoshida, "where have I seen these eyes before? I seem to know them well. Eyes just like them have smiled at my happiness, and wept at my sorrows."

And suddenly he understood. This tiny babe was his old, old wife. Foumi, alas, had become too young! Without doubt, she had feared that the magic might not be effective if she took but one sip of water. She had thought one sip would not make her youthful

enough, and had drunk so much at the fountain that she had become a few months' old babe.

Yoshida, with a sigh, fastened the tiny creature to his back as mothers do in order to carry their children, and returned home filled with melancholy. He would have to bring up and guard like a father the companion whom he had expected to see return to him lovely and graceful as on the day of their wedding.

* * * * *

Back in his home, Yoshida placed his cherished little burden on his bed and covered it warmly. Then he seated himself beside the child, and began to revolve his unhappy situation in his mind. What use was his new-found youth to him, now that he had lost his cherished companion? And while lost in gloomy thought, he chanced to look at the image of the little god Foukourokoujou. It seemed to him that the little god's eye was fixed on him, and that he smiled in his beard.

"Perhaps Foukourokoujou had grown weary of our complaints, and wished to amuse himself at our expense," he thought. And looking at the god he said, "What shall I wish? I do not know whether you can restore peace to my soul, but if you can, do so, Foukourokoujou, you who have watched so long over my dear Foui and myself!" As he said this prayer, he felt his eyes close, and a moment later he was peacefully sleeping.

* * * * *

The mid-day sun, falling on Yoshida's face, awakened him. He sat up on his bed, and recalled what had happened that morning. Yet, how strange! His hands were no longer a young man's hands. They were wrinkled and trembling. He raised them to his head, and found that his hair was scant. Nor did he feel that youthful abandon which had filled him when he had first returned from the spring, and then run back in search of his wife.

His wife? Casting a glance at his side he saw that she was fast asleep, and looked just as she looked for years. This was not the little child he had carried into the house a few hours before, but his old Foumi, with her shrivelled face, her innumerable wrinkles, and her expression of unchanging kindness. Gently he awakened her.

"What has happened?" she asked. "I dreamt I had become a tiny baby girl. How I suffered because I was unable to speak to you! And you seemed to be a young man, and were carrying me on your back. Was it a dream?"

"No," answered Yoshida, "for I remember it also. A few hours ago I was twenty, and I had found a baby Foumi near the fountain where, no doubt, she had drunk too much of the water of youth. And how she worried me, that baby Foumi!"

"How did it all come to pass?" asked his wife.

Yoshida pointed to the image of the little god

Foukourokoujou. "I think," said he, "that the little god wished to give us a lesson."

"Oh," cried Foumi, "how I wish I might drink once more of the water of the blue spring! This time I would be more careful."

"Wife," answered Yoshida, "I doubt if the spring still be there."

They took their way to the forest to make sure, and could find no trace either of the scarlet maple or of the spring.

"Dear Foumi," said the wood-chopper, "true wisdom consists in cheerfully accepting what cannot be altered. The Fountain of Youth did not bring us the joy we desired. Let us cherish the happiness which is ours, and enjoy our old age together!"

For a moment Foumi was silent, and then she replied, "You are right. There is nothing more beautiful than to see the cherry-trees break forth into blossom beneath the breath of spring. Yet when the blossoms have fallen all our regrets will not make them bloom again."

MIJA-DSIN-USIN,
THE HUNDRED AND ONE TIMES
BEAUTIFUL

(A Kabyle Tale)

ONCE upon a time there was a sultan who had an only son whom he loved dearly. But he feared if he allowed him to go out into the world some misfortune would befall him, so he kept him shut up in a room of his palace, and three times a day a negro slave-girl brought him his food. One day as she entered the room, the youth saw a bone sticking from her pocket, and when she bent to set his food before him, the bone fell to the ground. The youth picked it up and asked: "Is there good meat on the bone?" "Yes," answered the negress, "but the marrow in it is better still."

Then the youth ate the meat and then, in order to get at the marrow, struck the bone against the window to break it. And the window, which by the sultan's orders had always been kept closed, flew open, and for the first time the youth saw the sky, and the courtyard before the palace, and the people in the courtyard.

Then the youth said to his father: "See, father, how

beautiful it is out in the world! Why have you kept me here a prisoner so long?" The sultan replied: "My son, I thought it would be better for you to remain here!" But his son answered, "Father, I have seen the world now, and I would die if I were kept here!" And, finally, his father had to yield to his entreaties and let him out. The following day he took a horse from his father's stables, rode it all day long, and when he returned the horse was so weary that it died. And thus he did the day after, and the day after that, until he had worn out six horses. But on the seventh day his father gave him a horse foaled the same day that his son had been born, and the name of that horse was Wind and Lightning.

The next day, when the youth was riding home, he passed a well, and there stood an old woman drawing water. The youth wished to let his horse drink and harshly said to the old woman: "Stand aside! Let my horse drink!" But the old woman answered, "Who are you to give me orders? One might think you had married the Hundred and One Times Beautiful!" The youth answered not a word, but he took note of the old woman's remark and rode home.

The following morning he begged his father to let him travel to the land of Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful, and after much hesitation the sultan granted his prayer, and gave him the horse Wind and Lightning, plenty of gold, and a negro slave

to take with him on his journey. Then the youth, travelling many days, at last came to the city in which the father of Mija-dsin-usin reigned as sultan, and as he entered he saw a woman who dwelt near the city gate, and asked her: "Can you lodge me, my horse and my negro slave?" But the woman at first was unwilling. Not until the youth offered her a round sum of gold would she consent to take him in, and allow the negro to care for his horse. The woman then prepared a good meal, and the youth ate, and when he had eaten he said to her: "Mother, where is the house of Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful?" Then the woman was frightened and answered: "Her father is the sultan, and dwells in this city. It costs dear even to speak the name of Mija-dsin-usin here, for her father has the heads cut off of all those who utter her name!"

Said the youth: "Mother, I only want to know where Mija-dsin-usin lives! Show me her house and I will give you gold uncounted." "Very well," replied the old woman: "Follow me to-morrow when I go out, and you shall see it."

So the next day the old woman took a staff and a basket and went through the city begging, and the youth followed her. And when she was in front of a certain house she stumbled and fell, and when she picked herself up she whispered to the youth: "Did you notice where I fell?" And he answered: "Yes,

I noted the house," and then the old woman told him: "That was the house after which you inquired."

"Mother, there is something else I would like to know," the youth then went on to say, "and that is whether a clever woman is to be found in this city?" The old woman replied: "There is a Jewish silversmith here, and his wife is the most cunning woman in town. Many people visit his shop." Then the youth said: "Then his shop will be the very place for me to visit." At sundown he went to the silversmith's shop and sat down quietly in a corner. A number of persons came in, talked and went out again, but the youth spoke to none of them. When night had fallen, he rose, laid a bag of five hundred golden *duros* on the silversmith's table, and went out.

The following day the youth again sought the silversmith's shop, again he seated himself in his corner, said not a word, and again, when he left, he laid a bag of five hundred golden *duros* on the silversmith's table. And thus the youth went in and out of the silversmith's shop for a number of days. At last, one day, the silversmith said to his wife, "Every evening a youth comes into the shop, seats himself in a corner and says never a word. But when he goes he always leaves a bag with five hundred golden *duros* with me." The woman answered, "If he comes to-morrow evening, invite him to supper." On the following day the youth appeared, and seated himself quietly in his corner without saying a

word, and as he was about to go out again laid down the bag of five hundred gold *duros* on the silversmith's table. But this time the silversmith stopped him and said: "Stay and eat supper with us to-night!" And the youth stayed. And after he had eaten, the silversmith's wife said to him: "What brings you to this city, and how is it you give my husband a bag of five hundred gold *duros* every day, without telling him why?"

Said the youth: "I wish to get into the house of Mija-dsin-usin." Then the silversmith cried: "Ask for my right eye and I will give it to you, but do not ask to enter Mija-dsin-usin's house!" But his wife said: "Why should it be impossible? Make a long cedar chest, long enough to hold this youth, and on it place the figure of a gazelle, worked in gold and silver. Let the chest be carried through the city, and offered for sale for a thousand pieces of gold. None will be rich enough to buy it save the sultan himself. And thus the youth will get into the house."

On the following day the silversmith made the cedar chest with its gazelle wrought of gold and silver, and the youth lay down on it. Then he had it carried through the streets of the city, but none had the money to buy it. Word of it came to the sultan, however, and he sent for it. After examining it he bought it for a thousand pieces of gold. And thus chest and youth came into the house of Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful.

Now every day a negress brought Mija-dsin-usin her meals in the subterranean chamber in which she dwelt. On the day when the chest was brought into the house the negress found Mija-dsin-usin asleep on her couch, at whose foot stood a silver and at whose head a golden lamp. When the negress entered with the food, Mija-dsin-usin awoke and asked: "What is there new in the house?" "Your father has bought the cedar chest with the gazelle," answered the slave. "Yes, something new happens for others every day," answered Mija-dsin-usin, "sadly, "and my father can ride through the streets of the city every day in the week. But I have been shut up in this underground chamber since my childhood, and all I see is the silver lamp at my feet and the golden lamp at my head." And then Mija-dsin-usin wept bitterly. So the negress went to the sultan and said to him: "Your daughter is weeping because she never sees anything of the world. I had told her you had bought the cedar chest with the gazelle." And the sultan replied: "Have the chest carried down into my daughter's chamber. It may give her pleasure."

So the chest was brought down, and Mija-dsin-usin was happy for the rest of the day, and when evening came she fell asleep. And when the negress had left her, the youth came forth from the chest and ate some of the beautiful maiden's food, changed the lamps—placing the silver lamp at the head of her couch and

the golden one at its foot—and once more lay down in the chest. And after a time Mija-dsin-usin awoke and felt like eating. And then she noticed that some one had eaten of her food, and also that the silver lamp had been placed at the head of her couch and the golden one at its foot. At once she ran to her mother and told her what had happened, and her mother said: "To-morrow I shall bring in your meals myself!" And the following day she brought Mija-dsin-usin her meals herself, but found her sleeping and left her so.

When Mija-dsin-usin awoke this time she found that some one had again been at her meal, and again had changed the lamps of silver and gold. Then Mija-dsin-usin looked at the cedar chest from every side and said never a word, but the following night when she lay down on her couch and closed her eyes, she did not sleep. And as she watched she saw the youth climb carefully out of the chest, eat a little of her food, and take the golden lamp from the head of her couch and place it at its foot. Then, when he was about to take the silver lamp and place it at its head, Mija-dsin-usin leaped up and held him and cried: "Who are you and what do you want?" The youth replied: "You are the daughter of a sultan and I am a sultan's son. I have come here to see you and win your hand in marriage." Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful, was happy beyond all measure when she heard him say this,

and they ate together and talked together, and when the youth heard the negress coming he slipped back again into his chest.

Thus it went for seven days, and the youth said: "I have my negro slave and my horse here in town. I wish to look for them, and then see your father and ask him to give you to me as wife." And Mija-dsin-usin cried: "But how will you be able to get out of this subterranean chamber without any one being the wiser?" So the youth told her: "I will break off one of the gazelle's feet. Then I will lie down in the chest, and you must cry, and ask your father to send the chest to the silversmith and have the broken foot repaired."

The youth hid himself in the chest, and when the negress came Mija-dsin-usin was weeping and said: "My gazelle has broken a foot! Is there no one who can put it on again?" So the negress ran to the sultan and told him his daughter was weeping and why. And the sultan said: "My daughter Mija-dsin-usin need weep no longer. Send the chest with the gazelle to the Jewish silversmith and he shall make what is broken whole again."

So slaves were called and they carried the cedar chest with the gazelle of gold and silver to the silversmith's shop, and there the youth slipped out and went to the house of the woman with whom he had left his negro slave and his horse. Then he mounted his horse, rode to the sultan's palace and entered it. The sultan,

who was seated on a costly rug, rose to greet the handsome youth.

The youth seated himself on the rug beside the sultan and said to him: "I have come to ask your daughter's hand in marriage." To which the sultan replied: "I have no daughter." Then the youth rose and said: "You have a daughter, and her name is Mija-dsin-usin. Yet if you do not wish to give her to me in marriage, know that if you are a sultan I am a sultan's son, and that I will leave you in enmity." Said the sultan: "If I have a daughter tell me where she is." And the youth answered: "She lives in a subterranean chamber beneath the very mat on which you are sitting." Then the sultan said: "Do you see those two sacks full of iron standing yonder? If you can lift them and throw them backward over your shoulder, then my daughter shall be your wife." And the youth took the two sacks full of iron, lifted them high in the air, and flung them over his shoulder.

Said the sultan: "I see that you are a strong man!" Pointing out of the window, he showed the youth the walls and towers of a city in the distance, and added: "That is the capital of my enemy. If you can conquer and subdue him my daughter shall be your bride." And the youth replied: "It shall be done." He called his negro, rode out to the city of the sultan's enemy, challenged its ruler to single combat and overcame him.

Thereupon the sultan gave his daughter Mija-dsin-usin to the sultan's son in marriage. And after the wedding festivities the youth begged the sultan to allow him to return to his own country with his bride. "Your request is just," answered the sultan, "I will accompany you." So the youth returned to his own land with his father-in-law and his bride, and the former remained with him for seven days.

When the seven days were up his father-in-law said to the youth: "Now I will return. Do you loan me a horse." And his son-in-law replied: "I have more than one good horse, choose whichever one you prefer." Said his father-in-law: "There is but one horse among them all that I should like to ride. Loan me Wind and Lightning!" So the sultan's son had Wind and Lightning saddled and led out. And his father-in-law mounted Wind and Lightning and said farewell to the youth. But he had asked for Wind and Lightning with an object, seeing that he could not bear to give up his daughter. And he called his daughter Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful, to him and said to her: "Give me your hand once more in farewell!" Then, when Mija-dsin-usin stepped to the horse's side her father grasped her hand and said: "My daughter, see that you are a good wife to your husband and, what is more, an even better daughter to your father!" And with that he swung her up on Wind and Lightning and rode off with her. There

were wild cries and shouts, and those in the courtyard flung themselves on steeds and galloped in pursuit; yet since there was not another horse equal to Wind and Lightning in speed, the sultan and his daughter could not be caught.

When his father saw that grief had taken possession of him, his heart was moved by pity for his bereaved son. He took him by the hand and led him to the seven subterranean chambers, the *thaserapth*, beneath his fruit-orchard, where he kept his treasures of gold and silver and precious stones. There he chose among them a plain golden ring engraved with words of power and said to his son: "Ride far out into the desert, where there is naught but the sky above and around you, and the sand beneath your feet. There turn the ring on your finger three times and wish that Mija-dsin-usin be restored to you. And if she has not forgotten you—for if she has the power of the ring is of no avail—she will appear."

So the youth mounted a horse, girded on his sword and rode out into the desert. For days and days he rode until he saw only the sky above and around him, and the sand beneath his feet. There he dismounted and turning the ring on his finger three times cried: "O Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful, come back to me, that happiness may once more be my portion!" But the skies remained empty and the figure of Mija-dsin-usin did not rise from the desert sands.

And the heart of the sultan's son was filled with despair and he thought to himself, "Mija-dsin-usin has forgotten me, and the magic of the ring has no power over her!" And he was about to lie down on the sand and wait for release from a life he no longer valued when far, far in the distance he saw a tiny speck on the skyline. It drew nearer and nearer, and at last he saw that it was a dove. The bird's wings moved feebly and wearily, as though it had come a great distance, and finally it fluttered to earth and lay panting at his feet. Then the heart of the sultan's son, in spite of his own grief and despair, was moved to pity. "Poor bird," he said, "perhaps you, too, are seeking a mate whom you have lost, and can never hope to find!" And he bent down and gently stroked its snowy feathers.

And lo, the minute his fingers touched the dove, it disappeared, and there stood Mija-dsin-usin, the Hundred and One Times Beautiful, and smiled on him! And in that moment the sultan's son forgot all his sorrows. He swung her on his horse and rode home with her, and there they lived ever after in untroubled joy and happiness.

THE AZURE LILY

(A Tale of Saracen Spain)

LONG, long before the displeasure of Allah was visited upon the Faithful in the pleasant land of Andalusia, and Abu Abdullah the Unlucky was driven forth from the palaces and gardens of Granada, the Sultan Sidi Leafar Ben Egnemoc reigned over the kingdom of Valencia. Great was the power and magnificence of Sidi Leafar. At his command architects adorned his capital with fountains and palaces and with mosques whose towers gleamed with tiles of blue and gold, and whose domes seemed made of clouds; while none could tell whether the fountains were marble in movement or water held motionless. In his youth the Sultan Sidi Leafar had been a mighty warrior, but now that age had seamed his black beard with silver hairs, though he still followed the chase, he spent much of his time in the fragrant gardens of his palace. There he quaffed *rosoli*, that pleasant drink flavored with cinnamon, told the beads of his rosary, and praised the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent. Truly the Sultan Sidi Leafar was a happy man, and not the least among his joys were his three handsome sons, Soliman, Yusouf

and Mohamed, horsemen swift as the hurricane and his faithful vassals.

Now one day the Sultan dreamed a dream, in which he saw a divine vision revealed to him. He dreamt that he beheld a *houri* descending from Allah's Gardens of Delight. In a distant corner of the earth she deposited the seed of a flower whose chalice held the secret of happiness. In his dream the Sultan saw the *houri* come down from the skies, saw her alight on the earth like a butterfly and, bestowing on the seed the sacred kiss which the Prophet—Blessed be his name!—had confided to her in parting, hide it in the ground. In vain did the Sultan, when he awoke, break his head trying to solve the riddle of his dream. Finally he called in his astrologers and his *santons* and told them of it, and all agreed that the dream must have a definite meaning, since the Prophet Mohammed would not make a mock of his illustrious descendant. They even told him more: reading and rereading the sacred books, they found a prophecy which predicted that a sultan's son would one day discover the secret Flower of Happiness. Sidi Leafar was so greatly astonished by these mysterious revelations, and they so completely took possession of his mind and his attention that his sultana, his favorite horses, his choicest hunting javelins and even his *rosoli* were all neglected, for he could think of nothing else.

A year went by and then Allah, the Compassionate,

took pity on the brooding Sultan. Breathing the breath of knowledge upon him, he made him aware that the flower born of the seed of Paradise was an Azure Lily, a lily of purest blue, neither grooved with white nor veined with rose or mulberry-color, but totally and entirely blue, as blue as a turquoise-stone, as blue as the sky or the sea when it is calm. Its color was a beautiful, uniform, distinct, perfect and unique blue. The divine mercy of Allah even went so far as to reveal to the Sultan Sidi Leafar that the Azure Lily, already opening its petals in the freshening coolness of the breeze, was to be found growing near a river called the River of the Sands, awaiting the prince who, once he had grasped it, would hold the happiness of the world in his hand.

Much had happened during the year just past: the infidels were advancing toward the kingdom of Sidi Leafar; fierce west winds had beaten down the standing wheat, and hunger as well as war threatened. A flaming comet had announced the coming of pestilence and the unchaining of Allah's wrath. The Azure Lily, therefore, was a flower much to be desired, and the Sultan, after praying a long time with his face turned toward Mecca, the holy city, summoned his three sons. Taking each of the three princes apart, one after the other, he spoke as follows:

"My son! Allah alone is great. He casteth down the proud and raiseth up the lowly. Close by the River

of the Sands grows a flower born of the Prophet's kiss. Its chalice holds the secret of happiness, and he who becomes the possessor of the Azure Lily will be happy, and bring happiness to his land and his people. The flower may only be plucked by one in whose veins runs the blood of kings. I am your father and my kingdom is in dire need of happiness. So go and search for the Azure Lily by the River of the Sands, O son of mine! Take with you my blessing, and may Allah have you in his guard!"

* * * * *

Soliman, Yusouf and Mohamed straightway took their departure. A mere request from their father was for them a command, and his mandate was like a precept from the Koran, an order to be fulfilled with veneration and respect. On the twelfth day of the month Chaaban they set forth from their father's kingdom and sallied out in search of the River of the Sands. Chance was their only guide, and chance is like a path in the water, whose traces are erased by every passing breeze.

How beautiful had been the land of the Sultan, their father, before the wrath of Allah had overtaken it! The wheat grew on its wide plains like an ocean with emerald waves. At intervals palm trees, their trunks like columns adorned with carvings, raised their heads crowned with clusters of golden fruit. Oranges gleamed amid the dark green foliage like sparks among

embers. The silvery olive-trees climbed the sloping hills, driving before them the pines which timidly fled from their advance. In grange and in orchard trees brought from Farsistan displayed their appetizing fruits, which seemed to unite concentrated balsam and exquisite aroma in natural containers. Below, on earth, all was verdure and vegetation; above spread a sky pure and serene!

The three princes rode on their way together until, reaching a little stream, Soliman, who wanted the Flower of Happiness for himself, proposed that they separate and each seek the Azure Lily alone. To this the others readily agreed and Soliman at once rode off in the direction of the North Star, while Yusouf turned his horse's head in the direction of the Orient. Mohamed, however, seeing that the hour of twilight was at hand, dismounted to say his prayer. Mohamed was the youngest of the princes, having just attained his eighteenth year, and the down which was beginning to cover his face could not conceal the charm of his handsome features.

No sooner had Mohamed ended his prayer than he was seized with a sudden and overpowering desire to sleep. His heavy eyes closed, yet in spite of the fact a thousand shapes and images were revealed to his slumbering vision. He saw a chain of beautiful *houris*, their arms intertwined, descending from the skies. The large, dark eyes of these children of the Gardens of

Delight were smiling, and all were singing a celestial song. The place and position of each link in this living chain of beauty was constantly changing, and the expression of each face changed as well; but the lineaments of every face still remained the same, and showed the features of one and the same woman, repeated over and over again. The first *houri* of this endless series appeared to be sleeping and was using the sun for a cushion; the last was playing upon earth with an Azure Lily. The chain of *houris* began with the delicacy of some wonderful fragrance and ended in the purest light. In the middle it was filled with the divine music of celestial throats, lovely caskets of rosy coral enclosing iridescent pearls of tone.

"I have eaten no *hashish*," said Mohamed to himself, "nor has any dog of an infidel made me drink the fermented juice of the grape. Why, O dream, dost thou make a mock of my despair? Ah, were I but awake and the flower I so much desire within reach of my hand, would I not grasp it!"

Now the dark-eyed *houris* redoubled their alluring gestures and tender songs, and the last of the chain—the loveliest of all—whose body gleamed like that of an archangel, took the Azure Lily, the Flower of Happiness, between her small, white, tapering fingers and, smiling as none but a *houri* can smile, held it near Mohamed's face.

The young prince made a desperate effort, stretched

out his arm and seized the flower. At once the *houris* disappeared and he awoke. The Azure Lily was growing by his side, and he held the stalk of the mysterious flower in his hand.

Soon after the gallop of two steeds fell upon his ear. Soliman and Yusouf arrived, mounted on their fiery steeds.

"What has happened?" they asked. "We heard mysterious songs, the sound of seraph wings! What has happened? What are you holding in your hand?"

"The Flower of Happiness, born of the Prophet's kiss!" answered Mohamed.

"What!" cried Yusouf. "You have found it?"

"Yes!"

"Soliman, we are disgraced! Let us slay him and bring the Flower to our father! We are princes as well as he is, and it will not lose its virtues in our hands."

"Spare me, spare me!" cried their brother. But there was no pity in the hearts of the other princes. Baring their scimitars, they did away with Mohamed. And when they had done so they buried him on the margin of the river, in the sand, in order to hide all trace of their crime.

* * * * *

In due time the gift of Mohammed, the Flower of the Prophet, reached the kingdom of the Sultan Sidi Leafar Ben Egnemoc and was solemnly placed within a golden chalice in the *Mihrab*. The princes who had

brought the magic talisman were loaded with gifts and praises; *zembras* and festivities, joustings with reeds and bull-fights were the order of the day, and in the general rejoicing the absence of Mohamed, the youngest of the princes, was scarcely noticed.

Yet in vain were all the festivals and rejoicings: the gift of the Prophet seemed more productive of misfortune than of happiness. The infidels took a number of Moorish fortresses, putting their garrisons to the sword; and soon the kingdom was in the greatest peril. And not alone the infidel sword, but hunger and pestilence as well decimated the Faithful. The omen of the blazing comet was fulfilled, and the Azure Lily seemed as evil in its influence as the star which had served as Allah's messenger.

And then it was that one day a little shepherd lad, playing a reed flute, wandered into the great square of the Sultan Sidi Leafar's capital. But whenever he raised his flute to his lips instead of wordless musical sounds it gave forth articulate song. From its frail body issued no mere harmonious notes: instead it sang with a human voice, and all who heard it were seized with terror.

For the flute sang : "Play, play, good shepherd, but do not speak my name, who was slain by the River of the Sands for the sake of the Azure Lily!"

The *Cadi* at once had the little shepherd haled into the presence of the Sultan Sidi Leafar. And there, be-

fore the Sultan, the miracle of the marketplace was repeated. But the Sultan Sidi Leafar had lost faith in mysterious and supernatural things. Suspecting that the shepherd wished to amuse himself at his expense, he tore the flute from him and gave it to his son, Soliman, to play. The latter took it with trembling hand, and no sooner had he placed it to his lips than the mysterious voice sang:

“Play, play, evil prince! You who play me will not name me, for you slew me by the River of the Sands for the sake of the Azure Lily!”

“By the beard of Allah, what may this mean?” cried Soliman, half-dead with fear.

But the Sultan said: “It is now your turn to play the flute now, Yusouf!”

“No, father,” replied Yusouf, terrified, “no, we are lost! This flute accuses us of our crime. It is true that Soliman and I did our brother Mohamed to death near the River of the Sands, in order to rob him of the enchanted flower. Judge me, if you will, but let me confess what I have done!”

“Wretches!” cried the Sultan. “You are to blame for all our misfortunes and the ruin of the kingdom. I shall forget that I am a father and only remember that I am a ruler. And now lead me to the spot where you slew my poor Mohamed.”

When the Sultan Sidi Leafar and his sons reached the bank of the River of the Sands, they found that a

small cluster of reeds had sprung up above the spot where Mohamed had been hidden away. It was one of these reeds that the little shepherd had cut to make him his flute. And thereupon the Sultan Sidi Leafar had justice meted out to his two wicked sons.

It is not known—for are there not many things which are known to Allah alone?—whether a drop of the life-fluid of the two guilty princes fell upon the Flower of Happiness and sullied its celestial azure. It is certain, however, that since that time botanists have vainly sought for an Azure Lily, a lily entirely and completely blue, as blue as a turquoise-stone, as blue as the sky or the sea when it is calm. And because the Azure Lily cannot be found it is useless for any mortal to try and find entire and untroubled happiness here upon earth. Blessed be the name of Allah, the Compassionate, to whom alone are revealed all hidden things!

THE KNOTTED NOSE

(A Mongolian Tale)

MANY, many years ago, in a certain city in Western India, there lived two brothers. Since the older of the brothers had little or nothing he could call his own, people did not think much of him; and he and his wife managed to keep body and soul together selling the healing herbs she culled and the firewood he chopped in the forest. The younger brother, on the other hand, was rich. He possessed the seven possessions of value—gold, silver, lapis-lazuli, crystal, red pearls, diamonds and corals—but kept his riches carefully for himself, and never so much as gave a copper coin to his poor older brother.

Once the younger brother decided to give a great feast, to which he invited all the leading men of the city, but neglected to ask his older brother, who thus lost the rare chance of enjoying a plentiful meal. When the older brother came home on the night of the festival his wife said: "Your brother has not invited us to his great feast. One might as well be dead as never get enough to eat!"

"Very well," said the older brother, for he had been

deeply hurt, "then I will die." Picking up his axe and a length of rope, he left the city. He wandered on and on, crossing many hills, and finally came to the edge of a great forest where numerous lions, tigers and other beasts of prey were drinking on the banks of a broad river. Avoiding the wild beasts, he followed the windings of the river, and at length, quite suddenly, found himself standing before a tremendous mountain wall of rock. And there, peering through the bushes which hid him from view, the older brother, his eyes and ears wide open, beheld a number of *ragini*, the beautiful spirits of the tones and melodies which fill the upper air, floating up and down on their great white wings to the sound of glorious music.

Then one spirit suddenly rose into the air straight along the great wall of rock, and soon flew back with a sack which she had drawn from an opening half-way up its towering height. In the presence of the others, who crowded about her, she drew an iron hammer from the sack and at once began to beat the sack with the hammer. And while she beat, she called out the names of all sorts of delicious foods, or garments and other objects. Whatever she called for came out of the sack at her bidding. And when she had coaxed forth a splendid meal for the many spirits from the sack, she called forth gold, silver and jewels, diadems, fluttering scarves of silk, and other precious objects, until the older

brother, watching in the bushes, could hardly believe the riches he saw were real.

The *ragini* feasted, then draped themselves in the beautiful colored silks and, after they had danced, they spread their wings and disappeared in the air. The spirit who had brought down the sack rose in the air and restored it to its hiding-place, and then flew off after her companions to the echo of celestial music.

When the older brother left the bushes and came to the place where the *ragini* had feasted, not a sign of their presence was left. But he had noticed the hole in the rock where the one spirit had hidden the sack. So he cut down some trees, made a ladder of them, climbed up the rock and brought down the sack. Then he took out the hammer, and as he beat the sack he thought, "I wish every good thing to eat would at once appear!" And sure enough, they came tumbling out of the sack, one after another, and the older brother enjoyed a meal such as he had never before eaten in all his life. And when he had eaten he returned home, carrying the sack over his shoulder and holding the hammer in his hand.

His poor wife had thought him dead, and was mourning for him when he entered his house. "Do not weep," said her husband; "I have brought something back with me which will keep us both alive!" So he showed her the bag, and how, when it was beaten with the hammer, it would yield whatever was asked of it,

food and garments, jewels and gold. So the older brother gave up his woodchopping, and his wife let the herbs grow as and how it pleased them, and they lived in peace and in plenty.

But the townspeople put their heads together, and began to gossip. "How is it," they said, "that this man has grown wealthy overnight? He used to be grateful if one bought a load of firewood of him; now he spends gold as though it burned his fingers." And the news came to the ears of the younger brother's wife, and she said to her husband, "I am afraid your older brother has managed, in one way or another, to steal some of our treasure. Else how would he have grown rich so suddenly?"

"I will look into it," answered her husband, and he went to his brother's home and said to him: "How did you get all this gold? If you have stolen it from me, I shall report it to the king, and as you know thieves are severely punished in this land." So the older brother told him how he had gone to a far, far place in the forest, meaning to die there, but that instead he had found the sack and the hammer and had brought them home. And he told the tale of all that had befallen him.

"Where is this place? Tell me how to reach it," eagerly said the younger brother, and the older brother told him. So the younger brother returned to his home, took an axe and a length of rope and went through the

forest until he came to the wall of rock. And when he got there he found the *ragini* drawn up in eight ranks, their wings drooping, and all howling in chorus in the most heart-breaking way. As soon as they caught sight of the younger brother they seized him before he could escape.

"This must be the fellow who robbed us of our sack!" they shouted, and "Kill him! Kill him!" was the cry raised on all sides. "No," said one of the *ragini*, "do not kill him. I know of a better plan. Let us change his appearance in such a way that he will be ashamed to go among his fellowmen." And to this they all agreed.

"We will draw out his nose until it is very, very long, until it trails on the ground, and then we will tie nine knots in it," said the spirit who had spoken before, and who was none other than the one who had brought out and replaced the sack in its hiding-place in the rock. No sooner was this said than it was done, and after tying the nine knots in the younger brother's nose all the *ragini* at once disappeared.

Dragging his nose after him the younger brother returned home, and when his wife caught sight of him as he came in through the door, she was so frightened that she jumped out of the window and started to run away. "Do not run away," cried the younger brother, "it is I, your husband. But I have been unfortunate in poking my nose into this business of the magic sack. I do not

wish to go on living with my nose in its present shape, and have made up my mind to die."

But his wife answered: "There must be some way in which your nose can be restored to its former shape. Not far from here, in a grotto in the rocks, there lives a holy lama, given up to a life of contemplation. He shall advise us."

"Send for him if you wish," said her husband; "I will receive his blessing and depart from this world."

When the lama came, the younger brother had concealed his nose beneath the bed-clothes. But the lama insisted on seeing it. When it was shown to him, however, with all its nine knots, he was at first so frightened that he, too, wanted to run away. He told them he could not advise them out of hand, but that he would consult the sacred books, and perhaps they would tell him how the knots might be untied.

When the lama returned the next morning, he said solemnly: "Only by means of your older brother's hammer and sack can the knots in your nose be untied." So the younger brother's wife sent for the older brother, and begged him to come to her house and bring his sack and hammer with him. But he trusted neither his brother nor his brother's wife, and before he would go to their house they had to swear that they would make no attempt to rob him of his precious belongings.

When he was led to his younger brother's couch the latter said to him: "You see what has happened to me!

Take what you will of my treasures, but touch the knots with your hammer so they will come untied, and my nose be restored to its former shape. If you will do this I will give you half my lands and my fortune." The older brother made him swear to this agreement, sign and seal it, and then he set to work.

He took the magic hammer in his hand, swung it around his brother's nose and cried: "May the knots of the eight spirit legions come undone!" And whenever he swung his hammer one of the knots in his younger brother's nose came undone. At last but a single knot remained. Seeing this the younger brother's wife thought to herself: "What a pity it would be if we had to hand over half our land and treasure! It is mere child's play to undo the knots." So she called out to the older brother, "Never mind about unloosing the last knot! Wait! Wait!"

"Ah," said the older brother, "you want to break your promise!" And off he went with the magic hammer. As he went he said to himself, "She will see that the last knot is not so easily undone, after all!" But the younger brother's wife had followed him, walking softly on tip-toe, and just as he was about to enter his house, she snatched the magic hammer from his belt and ran off with it.

"She has stolen my hammer!" cried the older brother, and hurried after her. But she had already disappeared into her own home.

There she stood by her husband's couch and cried "May the knot of the eight spirit legions come undone!" And swung the hammer as the older brother had done. But, since she did not know how to handle it, instead of swinging it around her husband's nose, she brought it down on his head with a thud, and that was the end of the younger brother. Then, according to law, the older brother received even more than half of the younger brother's lands and treasures.



ROTHISEN AND KEO-FA

(A Cambodian Tale)

MANY centuries ago, the divine Prince Rothisen, in another form and under another name, filled with the wisdom of his previous existences, took his way through the world in search of happiness.

Glad at heart when he was able to help another fellowbeing, disdainful of passing pleasures, he rejoiced all whom he met with the kindness of his glance, which mirrored his soul; with his natural goodness, his innocence; and, finally, with a thousand gifts which Indra bestows on those who are destined to make glad the nations, an invisible halo of love which wins all souls.

One day Prince Rothisen stopped at the bank of a stream of crystal water, and plucked a lotus-leaf from which to make a cup to quench his thirst. And as he stood there, a young slave-girl hastened to the water, bearing a jar in her bare arms.

"Let me drink from your jar, maiden!" said the Prince.

She dipped her jar in the stream and held it out to him. And when he had quenched his thirst he asked her, "Whither are you bearing water?"

"I fill my jar for the bath of my mistress, the Prin-

cess Keo-Fa, who is beloved by all who approach her," replied the maiden, and went her way.

* * * * *

At the palace, while the slave-girl was pouring water over the head of the Princess Keo-Fa, she said:

"While I was dipping water, a prince, a stranger with the kindest glance I have ever seen, begged me to let him quench his thirst from my jar, which I did."

And while she spoke, and the water ran down the Princess' body, the latter felt a tiny object catch in her hair. Groping for it, she found that it was a ring. She hid it in her hand, and replied:

"Return and fill your jar again. See whether the prince still be there, and tell me what he is doing."

And while the slave-girl returned to the stream where Rothisen had spoken to her, the Princess thought:

"This marvellous jewel is surely the young prince's ring. I can tell from what my servant reports whether he is an impertinent, who has purposely dropped the ring in the jar, or whether it fell from his hand while he was drinking, to announce the husband Indra has destined for me."

"When I came to the stream," said the slave-girl on her return, "I found the prince in tears, searching in the grass for a ring which he had lost. He valued it above all others, for it was a magic ring given him by his mother, a ring that grants all wishes. He begged me to help him look for it."

Then the Princess Keo-Fa knew that the ring had come to her by Indra's wish, and she told her servant to return once more to the prince and say to him:

"Search no longer for the ring which you have lost! It shall be restored to you when you win the hand of the daughter of the king of this land, the Princess Keo-Fa. Hence do what you may to bring about that event!"

* * * * *

The Princess Keo-Fa's father had thus far discouraged all pretenders to her hand. To make their suit impossible, he asked them questions which they could not answer, or required them to perform impossible tasks. Nor had the Princess herself shown any interest in the princes whom her beauty drew to her father's court.

When Prince Rothisen, however, appeared at court, and asked for Keo-Fa's hand, the nobles were struck by his noble face, which seemed to reflect the highest qualities of heart and mind, and all murmured: "At last the suitor whom we wished to see has come."

And even the king thought: "Never yet have I seen a young man like this one. He is sure to please my child. Yet first I must subject him to a test which will put off the separation I dread."

He called for an enormous basket of rice to be brought him, and said to Rothisen:

"Every one of these grains of rice has been marked,

as you may see, and each grain has been counted. They shall now be scattered before your eyes in the palace gardens, and in the surrounding fields and woods. If, without a single one being missing, you bring them back to me to-morrow, I will admit that your request deserves consideration."

And it was done as he had said. Rothisen, bearing the empty basket, returned to the bank of the stream and having knelt, cried:

"O all ye birds, and insects of the air, ye ants of the earth, do not devour the tiny grains of rice which have been scattered over the ground! Aid the love which fills my heart and put nothing in the way of my gaining my cherished wish! And thou, mighty Indra, if the Princess Keo-Fa was my companion in previous existences, let me win her hand, and make good in this life any wrongs I may have done her in another!"

Suddenly, while he was speaking, joyous twitterings sounded among the branches of the trees. His prayer had been heard, and birds of every kind fluttered up, carrying in their beaks the grains of rice which had been scattered from the basket, until each and every grain had been restored. Prince Rothisen gently caressed the birds and thanked them.

The following day, astonished by Rothisen's success, the king had the basket carried to the banks of the Great River, into which the grains of rice were flung, and then said to Rothisen:



Prince Rothisen gently caressed the birds and thanked them

"I wish each one of them returned to me to-morrow!"

Like the birds, the fishes were the servants of the favored of Indra, and hastened to return the grains.

Yet when the count was made, the monarch said, "One grain of rice is missing. Return and search for it."

* * * * *

Seated by the river-bank, Rothisen called to the fishes:

"Is it possible, O friends with silver scales, that a grain of rice has been lost? Search for it amid the sands and rocks in the bed of the stream, and even in the bodies of those beings who inhabit the stormy waters, and may not have heard my prayer. I cannot believe that one among you, evil of heart, has sought to steal it. My life's happiness hangs on this little grain of rice. Be merciful and let me be happy!"

All the fishes looked at each other with surprise; but one, who had hidden behind his companions, swam forward and said:

"Forgive me, who am the guilty one! Here is the last grain. I took it thinking that my theft would pass unnoticed."

Then Rothisen, with the tip of his little finger, struck him gently across his snout.

And suddenly his snout became curved, and has remained so in all the fish of his kind. And ever since,

the fish who sinned against Indra's favorite has been known as the "Crooknose." Hundreds of years have passed since that day when Rothisen struck the fish, and yet the "Crooknose" is still unpardoned.

Each year, however, his entire tribe, at the rainfall which precedes the rising of the stream, meet at Kierioul-Kidnva, near Pnom-Penh, in the Great River, to swim together to the temple of Angkor, there to bow before great Buddha's statue and plead for forgiveness.

Yet in the same place, to prevent them from gaining their end, gather men of the river country, Khmers, Youns, Chinese, even the Moslem Kiams, who do not follow divine Indra's law. So well do they work together to bar the Great River with their nets, that not a single fish is able to reach Angkor. Though the fish chose a favorable day, and rush forward suddenly in a strong column to break through the net, their efforts are vain. They are expected eight days in advance, and all are captured. The people laugh at their misfortune, and they serve to nourish all of Cambodia.

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When Rothisen, carrying the last grain of rice, appeared before the king, he excused himself so gracefully for having lost time searching for it, that the monarch, captivated, spoke as follows:

"O prince beloved of the heavens, I hope you may win my daughter's hand! Yet as a final test, you must

tell me, merely by seeing her little finger, which among all the maidens in my palace, is my daughter.

“To-morrow, all the young daughters of my nobles and princes, all the women living in my palace, shall thrust their little fingers through small holes pierced in the wall of the great hall. You shall be led past the long row of these out-stretched fingers. And if, when you seize one of them, it turn out to be the finger of my beloved daughter, then the banquet shall be a wedding banquet. She shall be yours as well as all my kingdom, for in order never to be parted from my child, I will give you my crown and my treasures.”

Rothisen, trembling with joy, a prayer in his heart, and without saying a word, passed along the line of the out-stretched little fingers the following day. Each one seemed more slender and delicate than the next, and there were hundreds and hundreds of them.

At last he stopped before one of them. He had seen, wedged between nail and flesh, a single grain of rice! Rothisen knelt and seized the finger. At the same moment the gilded casement above it opened, and Rothisen, recognizing the magic ring he had lost, found himself in the presence of his betrothed. Tears of happiness moistened his eyes, he was raised by the king, who placed the Princess' hand in his, and with the smile of the Princess Keo-Fa there came to his ears strains of celestial music and the festive acclamations of the court.

THE LOVELY AREVAHATE

(A Tale of the Caucasus)

MANY hundreds of years ago a certain king reigned in a kingdom on the other side of the Caucasus mountains. He possessed a countless amount of gold and silver, many flourishing cities, and innumerable host of soldiers, but the golden cradle in his palace stood empty, and the fact that he had no child destroyed all the pleasure he might have taken in his power and riches.

One day while he was walking in his gardens, sad and lonely, he suddenly noticed a pretty little snake which, together with some baby snakes, was warming itself in the sun. One of the tiny serpents was winding itself around its mother's neck in play, a second was thrusting its head into her mouth, a third was caressing her with its little forked tongue. Hidden behind a bush the king watched them for some time and then cried, with a sigh:

"Alas, even a snake can enjoy the love of its little ones! It takes pleasure in caressing them. And I, with a heart full of affection, have no child upon whom to spend it. I would be glad if I had even a little serpent to cherish and comfort me!"

The king had spoken these words without reflection, and gave them no further thought. Yet, when he returned to his palace, there in the empty cradle lay a little snake. But the little snake did not long remain little. It grew and grew with frightful rapidity and in a short time became a veritable dragon. Then the queen and all the attendants in the room were terrified and ran away, while the poor dragon, finding itself thus deserted, began to cry. But so terrible were the wails of the young dragon, so piercing were its howls that every one in the palace trembled.

Until now no one had dared to tell the king that the empty cradle which stood in the queen's room had suddenly been filled with a young serpent. But when the cries of the snake-child he had wished for reached his ears, he asked the reason of the horrible noise and the courtiers were obliged to tell him.

The king remembered his imprudent words and bit his fingers in his despair. Then he questioned his servants, saying: "How large is this dragon? Is it as large as a man?"

"O Sire," the servants replied, "it has not as yet grown to man size, but it is growing so fast that it will soon be larger than a man!"

The king considered for a moment. At length he said, with a sigh, "That which is must be. Serpent or dragon, this creature is my son. I must care for it and nourish it so that it does not die." By his command

all sorts of rich food was offered the dragon, but the creature refused to eat any of it, and continued to utter its frightful cries.

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Then the king sent for all the wise men of the kingdom. "What should a serpent have to eat?" he asked them. "I do not wish it to die of starvation." "According to what I read in the books of wisdom," replied one of the sages, "a dragon of this kind eats only young girls." And with this opinion all the others agreed. In spite of his objection to seeing his son die of starvation, the king, who was kind and human, thought this a very cruel way of nourishment. However, in order to put the wise men to the test, he said, "Very well, I shall follow your advice. Let us begin with the daughter of the sage who spoke first, and then the daughters of all the rest of you, who have agreed with him, may take their turn."

Then the wise men were troubled and said to the king, "Sire, we are ready to sacrifice our daughters in order that your son may live. But what will you do once they are devoured? Do you think you will find all your subjects as loyal as we are? When you begin to ask the people for their daughters, they will revolt and you may lose your throne and your life. It would be better to send soldiers to other kingdoms to seize and carry off the girls and bring them hither."

The king did not approve of this advice. At the

same time he did not wish to let the dragon die. Without a word he retired, for he did not know what he should do. And, evening having come, he went to rest and after tossing restlessly on his couch for a long time, finally fell asleep.

In his slumbers an old woman appeared to him. In spite of her age she was handsome and agreeable to look upon. Her silver hair shone like molten metal and her unwrinkled face gave forth a kind of light. What made her appear old was, together with her silver hair, a pensive look, like that of some one who has seen many things and has pondered them all. Everything about her breathed kindness.

"You have done well," she said to the king, "to refuse to consent in your heart to the sacrifice of those innocent young girls. Yet I have come to tell you that—without any evil coming of it—you may follow the advice the wise men gave you. All the young maidens carried off by your soldiers shall be restored to their families, save one alone, and I will watch over her safety."

"And who may you be," cried the king, "who bring me such a comforting message?" The apparition smiled. "I am Arevamair, the Mother of the Sun!" she replied. While she spoke these words her whole figure suddenly gave forth such a splendor of radiance that the king was dazzled. Before he could recover from his bewilderment, she had disappeared.

When he awoke, full of confidence and hope, he declared himself ready to follow the advice of the wise men. So he sent out soldiers across the mountains which bordered his kingdom, ordering them to carry off a hundred young girls from the Armenian country and to return with them as quickly as possible.

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While he awaited their return, the hungry dragon still refused all nourishment. At times it crawled about the great chamber which had been abandoned to it with terrible complaints and wails; at others it fell into a heavy slumber, only to awaken suddenly and resume its wailing. And while the servants in the king's palace went about in fear and trembling, the soldiers sent out by the king were drawing near an Armenian village not far from the mountains.

In this village there lived a woman of a jealous and unkind disposition. She had a daughter of her own, as dark and homely as a prune-tree, named Mauchi, and a step-daughter, the lovely Arevahate, who was radiantly beautiful. The mother disliked Arevahate because of her beauty and blamed her for her daughter's ugliness. All day long poor Arevahate was driven from one task to another. She had to bake the bread and wash the dishes, lead the cow to pasture and carry enormous bundles of hay. She was made to do these things in the hope that her fair complexion would become blackened, her hands coarse and

wrinkled, and her tall form bowed and bent. But Arevahate, strange to say, grew stronger and more beautiful day by day; while Mauchi, who spent the day doing nothing, like a young lady, instead of a village girl, grew more thin and homely than ever.

Arevahate was not afraid of work, so the fact that her every minute was occupied did not make her unhappy. As soon as she had done her other tasks she wove silk thread on the loom in the house, or, if she went to fetch water, she took her knitting along. Then, while waiting her turn at the well, instead of gossiping with the other girls, her needles clicked busily.

Arevahate was skilled in every way. She knew how to work the ground, dig a well, weave cloth, cut and sew stuffs, cook, make butter, and keep everything in order. In a word, she was a girl without an equal. But all this did not win her the good graces of her stepmother, who seized every opportunity to fling her on the ground, kick her, tear out her hair and otherwise maltreat her.

Whenever her stepmother had abused her, lovely Arevahate went to the cemetery. There she knelt beside her mother's grave, cried herself out, and returned home more tranquil at heart. Sometimes she rested her head against the cherished grave, and fell asleep. Then her mother would appear to her in her dreams and she would fling her arms around her neck. And this mother-love which she rediscovered for a moment

was her constant refuge. In her dreams her gentle mother consoled her, told her to continue to be good and to support her trials with courage, for the day was coming when all her troubles would be at an end.

Then the maiden would rise strengthened. Once more she would feel calm and serene, would forget her sorrows and continue to flourish as the rose.

When she gave to the poor, she did it so graciously that the beggar who received a trifle from her hand took more pleasure in it than in a rich offering, and wished her long days of cloudless joy. Every dumb creature rejoiced to see her. The domestic animals about the house showed their dislike for Arevahate's stepmother. The dog barked at her, the cow would not let her lead her to pasture, the bull gave her an ugly look, the horse reared and the goat and the sheep ran away. But these same animals, the good beasts, as soon as they saw Arevahate, surrounded her on all sides, caressing her, licking her hands, pushing each other out of the way in order to get closer to her. The cow of her own accord stood so that Arevahate could lead her to pasture. When she went for water the dog followed her, to defend her if necessary.

Now a rumor spread through the village that every young girl who went to the fields alone disappeared and did not return. It was said that a dragon was devouring the young maidens of the countryside. Arevahate, who was always alone, knew nothing of

this danger, but her stepmother, who had heard of it, was filled with cruel joy.

"I will send Arevahate to the pasture," she said to herself, "and there she will be swallowed up by the dragon." So one day she brought the cow and sheep to Arevahate and told her to lead them to pasture. "Here is some bread for a meal," she said, "and a bundle of wool. Do not come back until evening and see that all the wool is spun."

The young girl drove the cow and the sheep before her until she reached a spot where the grass grew tall and lush. Seeing that no creature had yet been pastured there, she sat down on the ground and began to work, while the cow and sheep took their ease and cropped the grass and the dog, who had followed her, lay down beside her.

The sun was about to sink when Arevahate had spun all her wool, and the young girl had risen in order to lead her beasts home when suddenly she saw a beautiful old woman standing beside her. She was the same who had appeared in a dream to the king whose son was a serpent. At once Arevahate moved in front of the dog to prevent his biting the stranger, but the old woman said with a smile:

"Have no fear, Arevahate! The dog will not bite me. He knows very well that I am a friend. See how gladly he wags his tail?"

"But tell me who you are?" said the young girl. "I

have never seen you. Surely you do not belong to our village?"

"I come from no village," replied the old woman. "I am not of this mortal world at all. I am the Mother of the Sun and am called Arevamair. Your sufferings have touched me and I have grown to love your innocence and your goodness. Kneel before me, for I wish to bless you, in order that your good wishes and longings may come true!"

Much astonished at these words, Arevahate examined the old woman more attentively and saw that, in truth, she resembled no creature on earth. Rays of light like sunbeams darted from her eyes, though they did not injure the sight; and her manner of speech was so sweet, her voice so melodious, that Arevahate thought she was listening to her mother's voice. Arevamair's robes shone and glittered. They seemed to be formed of liquid molten gold and not of sewn or woven stuffs.

Arevahate knelt down before the Mother of the Sun. She bent her head to kiss the hem of her robe, but the kind old woman, raising the young girl's head, laid her hand upon it and blessed her, saying:

"May the violets spring up beneath your feet! May your smile put the rose to blush! May your tears turn into pearls! May scorpion and serpent be powerless to harm you! May the crown rest upon your brow! May your dwelling-place be a palace with walls of gold and silver, and a ceiling of precious stones! I

bless you, cherished maiden, that you may be protected from all evil, and promise that not a hair of your head shall be injured!"

Having said this she added, as she embraced the young girl, "And may this kiss add to your beauty!"

Then she gave her a small package which contained a robe. Ah, but what a wonderful robe it was! It was all starred with jewels and so fine in texture that it did not appear to be made of cotton or even silk, but of living sunbeams.

"You must carry this robe upon your heart," said Arevamair, "until the day of your wedding. On that day draw it forth and put it on. Remain pure and good and fear nothing. And now I must leave you, for my son awaits me."

When she said these words she rose to the horizon like a golden cloud, for which the sun was waiting, and disappeared with him. Arevahate, dumbfounded by this apparition, at first thought it all a dream; yet against her breast she felt the marvelous robe which the aged woman had given her.

"No," said she, "it was not a dream." And her sadness turned to joy, her heart beat with happiness and her face was wreathed in smiles. She spoke gaily to the dog, petted the cow and sheep and, thus having shared her joy with them, continued on her homeward way.

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On she went, on and on, until, suddenly, she saw a party of armed horsemen, whose breastplates gleamed in the last rays of the setting sun, advancing toward her. The dog, disquieted, circled his mistress and looked at her; and she herself realized that these soldiers could have no good object in view. Yet how was she to escape from them if they decided to seize her? She had heard say, at times, that bandits seized children and young girls in order to sell them into slavery in distant countries. They received a good price for their human merchandise if it were handsome and vigorous. Lest the bandits might think her a valuable prize, Arevahate covered her face with earth muddied by a recent rainfall. Then she continued on her way, bent over, following her cow. Alas, her precaution was in vain! As they drew near the horsemen saw a young girl who struck them as being very ugly, but they said to each other, "Handsome or ugly, what is the difference? She will go down the dragon's throat in either case!" And one of them cried out in a loud voice, "Ho, there, girl! Do not try to escape! You will have to ride behind one of us, for we will have to take you along!"

Arevahate stood still. What was she to do? Resistance was out of the question, and besides, even though they took her far, far away, could she be more unhappy than she already was in her stepmother's home? She said farewell to her dog, and kissed her

cow and her sheep good-by between the eyes. Then she was swung up on one of the horses. The cow began to low and the sheep to blat when they saw their dear mistress carried off; while the dog, whining, followed her for a long time, but had to stop when the horses darted off at a gallop, and the young girl waved her hand to him in farewell.

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The raiders finally came to a great rock where they dismounted and, leading her through a narrow passage, brought Arevahate into a spacious cavern, where were assembled more than eighty young girls who had been carried off from the surrounding villages. These were guarded by other horsemen, and the unfortunate creatures wept in a manner which would have moved a heart of stone. Yet they did not dare raise their voices. They stifled their sobs and only murmured their exclamations of despair. Arevahate tried to comfort them. If they were sold into a neighboring kingdom could they not make their escape and win back to their own country? Yet among them many already knew that they were being carried off to be fed to a dragon, for the news had spread throughout the entire country. Arevahate, who had not known of it was, nevertheless, prepared for all. If she had to die, she wished to die bravely. Yet she could not forget the old woman's promises and blessing and felt sure that she would escape death.

A few more young girls having been brought to the cavern, they were now all led forth. Night had fallen, but the full moon lit every path. Across valley and mountain the captives were taken to the neighboring kingdom, each being fastened behind one of the horse-men. They rode all night long, and then part of the following day, until finally they reached the capital of the king who was the father of a serpent.

All the inhabitants of the city poured out to see them. What a surprise they were and what a marvelous sight! For all these Armenian girls were beautiful, one more beautiful than the other. It was a great pity, so all agreed, to think that they were doomed to become a dragon's prey. Among them all Arevahate alone appeared ugly, with her face covered with mud.

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The moment had come for the king to give his orders. He could not help shuddering when he thought of the first among these young girls to be left alone with the huge reptile, which had grown to enormous size, and become more and more famished. Yet he, too, had faith in the words of the Mother of the Sun. He gave orders that the young girls were to be guarded in an attractive mansion near the palace, that they were to be well fed and cared for, and that one among them be taken to the dragon.

The guards who had been entrusted with carrying out the king's orders might have drawn lots to see who

would be the first victim. Yet, without much regard for justice, they singled out Arevahate because she looked so homely to them, and because she was the only one who betrayed no fear. "Let us take this one first," they said; "she will go without struggling and that will encourage the rest!" So they took Arevahate by the arms and led her to the wing of the palace where the dragon dwelt. On the way they said to her: "You are going to your wedding. Your betrothed is the king's son and you shall be his princess."

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While they were speaking they came to a beautiful garden, attached to the dragon's apartments. In the midst of this garden was a marble pool of limpid water. The guards wished to open the door of the apartment and cast in the young girl, but she said to them, "Since you are leading me to the king's son, leave me alone for an instant, so that I may wash my face and arrange my garments. I would be ashamed to have him see me as I now am."

To this they agreed and withdrew outside the garden, whose gate they guarded so that she could not make her escape. When she was alone Arevahate washed her face and hands, tastefully arranged her hair, and put on the robe given her by the Mother of the Sun. After a moment the guards returned. Yet what was their surprise when they saw her thus adorned. It seemed to them that the dawn had risen

in the middle of the day. Not one of them could believe that this radiant child was the same girl they had brought there, or even that she was a creature of the earth. They thought that she had descended from the skies in the shape of a poor girl, homely and wretched, and that now she had appeared to them in her true form.

Arevahate said to them, "Why do you stand there staring at me, with your mouths open and your faces full of wonder? Lead me where I am to go!" Shuddering with horror at the thought of what they were about to do, the guards fell on their knees before her.

"Forgive us, forgive us!" they cried. "We did not bring you hither for your wedding, but to deliver you over to the dragon which inhabits yonder chamber. The dragon is the king's son. Pardon our crime, and, if you desire, we will save you, even though we hang for it!"

Arevahate was quite without fear. She felt that Arevamair, her protectress, had some hidden design with regard to her which she ought not to attempt to evade. So she replied in a firm tone of voice, "I do not wish to expose you to death. Give me the keys of the door and go your way, for I do not fear the dragon."

She took the keys, opened the door, traversed an empty vestibule and entered a great hall. There, stretched out on a divan, she saw a colossal dragon. At first shocked and unable to speak, she soon regained

her courage and, keeping at some little distance from the reptile, she said to it:

"I salute you, O son of the king! I come to you from Arevamair, the Mother of the Sun. She wishes you happiness and a long life." The dragon raised its head and looked at the young girl with its flaming eyes. She shuddered and her whole body trembled, while her hair rose on her head. Yet she did not give way a single step, but remained where she stood and returned the dragon's look. Seeing that its glance terrified her the reptile turned away its head, and drew together the monstrous rings of its body. Several times, however, it turned to look at her, and each time that it did so she trembled. Nevertheless, she remembered that Arevamair had blessed her, and promised to shield her from all harm, so that her wishes might be gratified.

"O son of the king," she said at last, "why thus torment me? Devour me without delay, if you wish to make a meal of me. But, if a human soul is hidden beneath your dragon scales, I bid you, in the name of Arevamair, to cast off your disguise!"

No sooner had she spoken these words than the dragon recoiled upon itself, swelled to enormous dimensions, began to twist and turn and, suddenly, burst with such a roar of sound that the palace shook to its foundations, and the king was so shaken that he leaped from his throne.

The courtiers and servants came rushing up from all sides to see what had happened and what did they behold? The dragon's scaly hide had been flung to the ground, like the formless cocoon from which the butterfly emerges. And before their astonished eyes stood a young man with a noble and handsome countenance, dressed in the whitest and finest of linen; while beside him was a young girl shining like the sun and clad in silks, gold and light. Each was smiling into the other's face.

No sooner had they been informed of this marvelous happening than the king and queen, frantic with joy, hurried up to embrace their son and Arevahate. Then they were married to each other in the midst of all sorts of rejoicing. The wedding festivities continued for seven days and seven nights. All the young Armenian maidens who had been carried away were among the guests, after which, laden with presents, they were dismissed to their own land. Nor did Arevahate, now that she had become a princess, forget her old friends. For a few gold pieces her stepmother, above whose envy and dislike she was now raised as high as the stars of heaven, was glad to let her have her dog, her cow, her sheep, and the rest of her village companions, who thenceforward, like their mistress, led a happy and carefree existence in the midst of joy and plenty.

THE MULLAH IDRIS

(*A Syrian Tale*)

ONCE upon a time there lived in the city of Damascus a woman who was always poor and needy because her husband was lazy and would not work. So one day his wife said to him, "Idris," for that was his name, "you have idled long enough. There is nothing to eat in the house, and there will be nothing to eat in the house unless you go to work and earn the money to buy it."

"But what am I to do?" asked Idris. "I have never learned a trade."

"Get a book of some kind, and read in it, as though you were a learned man, a *mullah*. Then go and lament over the graves, and the women will give you money." So Idris did as his wife told him and, sure enough, the women gave him a little money, day by day, for reading prayers and lamenting over the graves, and besides the money he acquired a reputation for great piety and learning.

Now it happened one day while the Mullah Idris was standing in the market-place, that the Sultan of Damascus rode through the streets, and stopped at a

goldsmith's shop to have a golden ring repaired. And while the goldsmith was repairing the sultan's ring he put it on his fingernail and raised his finger in the air and—snap! off flew the ring and was gone. It chanced to fall in the slipper of lazy Idris, though neither the sultan, the goldsmith nor any of the bystanders saw it, and Idris hurried off home as fast as he could, with the ring in his slipper.

The sultan was very fond of his golden ring, so a great hue and cry was raised, and the whole marketplace was thoroughly searched for it, but all in vain. And when the sultan saw that the ring was not to be found, he called together all the magicians in Damascus to tell him what had become of it. And they drew their magic circles and murmured strange incantations and made all manner of magic, but none of them could give the sultan any news of the ring. At last one of the court officials said to the sultan, "O Light of the World, there dwells in Damascus a man of great piety and learning, the Mullah Idris! Perhaps, if he were sent for, he could find the ring." So Idris was brought before the sultan and the latter asked him his name. "I am called the Mullah Idris," was the answer. "And can you find my golden ring for me?" asked the sultan. "Indeed I can," replied Idris, "but you must give me until this evening to discover it." This the sultan agreed to, and that very evening the Mullah Idris returned to the palace and brought the sultan his lost

ring. Not only was the sultan so pleased that he gave Mullah Idris a handsome reward, but he also formed a high opinion of his miraculous powers, and determined to call on him again when he was in a difficulty.

Idris' wife was happy when he showed her the sultan's handsome gift. But Idris himself was far from happy, for he feared—and with reason—that the sultan would again think of him the next time he was in a pinch. And, sure enough, so he did.

One day forty robbers broke into the sultan's palace and robbed him of his entire treasure in a single night. Again the sultan called together all the magicians, and again they drew their magic circles and murmured incantations with no result. Again the sultan sent for the wise Mullah Idris. To Idris he said, "I shall give you forty days in which to restore to me the treasure of which I have been robbed. This will be easy for you to do, for you are the possessor of hidden powers. If you do not produce the treasure in forty days, however, I shall know that it is because of ill will on your part, and will send for the headsman."

Idris went home, sad and downcast in the highest degree. When his wife spoke to him he did not answer her, but when she continued to question him he said at length, "What use is there in telling you? The sultan's treasure has been stolen, and he insists that I return it to him in forty days. If I do not I lose my head."

And then he went out to the marketplace and bought forty nuts. To himself he said, "Each day I will crack a nut and eat it, and when the forty days are done the nuts will all be gone, and I shall be gone as well."

Now the first day, while the Mullah Idris sat within his home, thinking sadly of his fate, the chief of the robber band which had stolen the sultan's treasure sent out one of his men, saying to him, "Go, listen at the Mullah Idris' door and see what he says! Then come back and repeat his exact words to me." The robber at once went off and listened at Idris' door. And no sooner had he settled down to listen than he heard Idris say to his wife, "Give me a nut." But when Idris took the nut and cracked it the robber went pale, for Idris looked at the keyhole through which he was peeping and added: "There is one of the forty!" Said the robber to himself, "By Allah, he knows that we are the thieves!" So he hurried back to his captain and told him what he had heard.

Then the robber captain sent out two more of his men and told them, "Be sure and listen to all that Mullah Idris says and come back and tell me." Off they went, and listening at Idris' door the two thieves heard him say to his wife, "Give me a nut," and then, "There are two of the forty!" The robbers at once ran off in a great fright and reported to their captain. Then the captain thought, "He knows we are guilty." Yet he

wanted to be quite sure, so he sent out three men the following night. But the only difference was that the Mullah Idris said, "There are three of the forty!" instead of "two."

So the captain made up his mind that his guilt was known to Idris, and on the fourth night he went to the Mullah's house together with his entire band. They flung themselves at Idris' feet and cried, "Our hope is in Allah and in you! If you will promise not to reveal our names to the sultan we will restore to you the whole treasure, down to the last gold piece. It is hidden in a certain garden, not far away, beneath a white stone."

At first Idris was unable to believe his ears, yet he acted as though he had known them to be the robbers of the sultan's treasure from the very start and said to them, "I knew from the first day that you had robbed our lord, the sultan, of his treasure, for I know all hidden things. Yet I will be merciful and keep your names a secret if you return the treasure at once." And this the robbers did, down to the very last gold piece.

The next day the Mullah Idris went to the sultan and said, "O shadow of Allah, I have read in my magic book and the hiding-place of your treasure was revealed to me! It now lies in my home. Send pack-horses and slaves to carry it away!" Then the sultan was filled with joy. Slaves and pack-horses were sent

to bring back the treasure to his treasury, and to Idris the sultan gave a mule laden with a bag of coined silver as a reward.

When Idris came home his wife danced about with glee, crying, "Did I not always tell you not to be shiftless and idle! Behold how Allah helps those who help themselves!" But the Mullah Idris shook his head gloomily and only answered, "Wife, wife, some day this reputation of mine will cost me my head!"

Now after the recovery of the treasure the Mullah Idris stood higher than ever in the favor of the Sultan of Damascus. Many envied him, but Idris did not envy himself. He lived in continual dread of the next test to which his knowledge of hidden things might be put. Yes, the Mullah Idris was an unhappy man, and the greater favor the sultan showed him the more unhappy he grew.

One day the sultan was walking with Idris on the outskirts of Damascus and they came to the great bath. "Let us go in and bathe," said the sultan to his companion. "Do you bathe here, O shadow of Allah," replied Idris, "but I cannot! It is against the rules of the order of mullahs to perform their ablutions in the public bath. I will go home and wash there." And the sultan went into the great bath while the Mullah Idris returned to his home. There he had his wife prepare a bath for him. Yet even in the bath the thought of his dangerous reputation as a worker of

miracles was never absent from his mind. Sitting there he happened to see himself, with his head and beard all soap, in the mirror which hung against the wall. An idea suddenly came to him. "It will be well if I pretend to be insane—as I look—hurry at once to the public bath, drag out the sultan by the beard and pull him around until he promises to leave me in peace. Then all my troubles will be at an end," thought Idris.

So leaping from his tub and clad only in his soap-suds, he ran through the streets of Damascus to the public bath. There he thrust aside the attendants, rushed in, and seizing the sultan by the beard dragged him out of the water and out of the bath itself. And the very moment the Mullah Idris and the sultan were out of the building, the latter—which was old and ruinous—collapsed with a tremendous crash in a shower of bricks and dust.

Now the Mullah Idris' first plan had been to pretend that he was insane. But when he saw the bath collapse, a better thought struck him, and he said to the sultan. "When you had entered the bath, O Light of the World, I went home and told my wife to fill a tub with water for me! And to kill time until my bath was ready I read in my magic book, without which I can work no wonders. As I did so the book spoke and said to me, 'Haste, haste, to the public bath! In a few moments the roof will collapse on the head of your lord the sultan!' So without losing time to dry

or dress, I leaped out of my tub and hurried to save you. And when I reached you there was no way of catching hold of you to drag you out of danger, except by seizing your beard and pulling you out by that means. And now—Blessed be Allah and his Prophet!—your life has been saved and my heart is filled with joy.”

Then the Mullah Idris paused for a moment and added in a sorrowful tone of voice, “Yet, alas, I have suffered a great grief as well! For when I leaped from my tub to hurry to your aid, my foot struck the magic book; it fell and rolled into the fire of the hearth and was utterly consumed. And now I can no longer perform the least little miracle.”

When the Sultan of Damascus heard this, he too was grieved, but the Mullah Idris, as a result of his happy thought, was freed from all further fear and apprehension. He returned to his home, and there he and his wife lived long and happily on the mule-load of coined silver which the sultan had given him when he was a famous worker of miracles.

THE PIT THE CADI DUG

(A Mosuli Tale)

ONCE upon a time Prince Fadlallah, son of the great Bin-Ortok, Sultan of Mosul, went to his father and told him he would like to go to Bagdad and see the city of the Caliph. So the Sultan Bin-Ortok opened his treasury, took out forty camel-loads of gold, gave him a host of servants and a hundred men of his bodyguard, and Prince Fadlallah set out across the desert. When the caravan was but a few days' distant from Bagdad, however, it was attacked at night by a great host of Bedouins. Fadlallah's companions were slain while they offered resistance, and when the Prince told him his name, the robber captain, who was his father's bitterest enemy, spared him for the moment only to promise him a death by torture in the near future.

Dragged to the robbers' camp and tied to a tree, Fadlallah had given up hope, when the entire band unexpectedly was called away by the report of a rich caravan which might be surprised a day's march further on. All the Bedouins left save the captain's wife and she, taking pity on the youth, untied his bonds and

directed him how to make his way to Bagdad. Two days later, footsore and weary, Fadlallah crept into the city which he had expected to enter with pomp and splendor, and took refuge in a mosque where he spent two days and two nights. Ragged, unshaven and dirty, Fadlallah was ashamed to disclose his princely rank. Driven by hunger, however, he decided to become a beggar until he could find a way of regaining Mosul. So he took his stand beneath the low window of a great mansion and begged for alms in a loud tone of voice. Soon an old slave woman came and offered him a piece of bread. As he was about to take it from her, the breeze happened to lift the curtain before the window, and looking into the room, Fadlallah saw a maiden of surprising beauty, whose radiant loveliness almost robbed him of his senses. He took the bread without knowing that he did so and stood motionless before the slave instead of thanking her. He spent the rest of the day before the window, hoping the breeze would once more lift the curtain, but in vain. When night fell he asked an old man who was passing to whom the house belonged.

"It is the dwelling of Muaffak, the son of Adban," said the ancient, "a man of wealth and standing. Not long ago he was governor of this city, but the Cadi of Bagdad, his enemy, found means to prejudice the Caliph against him and he lost his position."

That night Fadlallah took refuge in a cemetery and

slept with his head resting on a gravestone. Suddenly he was awakened by two men who asked what he was doing there. When he said he was an unfortunate beggar, they told him to follow them, led him to a tomb where their companions were eating and drinking, and invited him to share their meal. From their talk Fadlallah soon discovered that they were thieves, and while he was wondering how he might leave their society without giving offence, the lieutenant of the Cadi suddenly entered with twenty or thirty police, and all, including Fadlallah, were seized and led to prison.

The next morning the Cadi entered the jail to examine the prisoners. When he came to Fadlallah the latter answered all his questions openly without, however, betraying his rank. And he told the Cadi of the beautiful maiden he had seen as the wind raised the curtain of Muaffak's house. When he heard the name of Muaffak the Cadi's eyes gleamed, and after thinking a moment, he said, "Young man, you may become the husband of that beautiful girl, Muaffak's daughter, if you follow my instructions. Do you wish to do so?"

Fadlallah thanked him and agreed, though he did not understand why he made the offer. The Cadi ordered the *aga* who led the police to take Fadlallah to the public bath. Meanwhile he sent two officials to Muaffak to say that he wished to consult him with regard to a matter of the highest importance. When Muaffak came, the Cadi embraced him with great cour-

tesy, much to the latter's surprise. "I wonder why my enemy the Cadi is so polite to me to-day?" thought Muaffak. "He must have something up his sleeve."

"Muaffak," then said the Cadi, "Allah does not wish us to remain enemies. An opportunity offers for us to forget the hatred which has divided our families for the last few years. The Prince of Basra arrived in Bagdad last night, and is living in my house. He has heard such glowing accounts of your daughter's beauty that he has fallen in love with her, and wishes to sue for her hand. He has asked me to act for him in the matter, and this I do all the more gladly since it offers a chance for us to become reconciled."

"I am surprised," answered Muaffak, "that the Prince of Basra wished to marry my daughter Zemrude and that you, who have always done all you could to injure me, should inform me of his wish."

"Let us forget the past," said the Cadi. "Let us bury the memory of all that we have done to each other, and in view of the happy union between your daughter and the Prince of Basra, let us live in good friendship for the remainder of our days!"

Now Muaffak was as good-natured as the Cadi was malicious. He dismissed all unkind thoughts, allowed himself to be deceived, embraced the Cadi and was swearing undying friendship at the moment when Fadlallah, who had been provided with a handsome robe and a turban of Indian muslin whose gold-em-

broidered tip hung down over his ear, entered the room.

"Illustrious prince," said the Cadi to him, "blessed be your footsteps! Here is my friend Muaffak, to whom I have spoken of your reason for coming to Bagdad. He is willing to give you the hand of his daughter Zemrude, who is as beautiful as a star, in marriage." Muaffak bowed low and said, "O son of a sultan, I am deeply honored to think that my daughter is the object of your choice, and that she may look forward to such great happiness!"

Prince Fadlallah, naturally, was very much surprised at these speeches, to which he did not know how to reply. He greeted Muaffak without saying a word, and the Cadi, who noticed his embarrassment, feared he might make some remark which would betray his evil scheme, said, "The marriage contract might as well be drawn up now in the presence of witnesses." When the witnesses had duly appeared and the contract had been signed, the Cadi said to Muaffak, "The affairs of the great, as you know, are not disposed of like those of other mortals. They call for haste and secrecy. The Prince is now your son-in-law. Take him to your home and introduce him to your daughter." At the Cadi's door two richly caparisoned mules were waiting; and Muaffak and Fadlallah mounted them and rode to Muaffak's house. There Muaffak held Fadlallah's stirrup with great respect while he dismounted, took him by the hand and led him to Zemrude, who

received him with every mark of favor and affection, in the belief that he was the Prince of Basra to whom her father had betrothed her. The following day the wedding feast was to be held. In the morning Fadlallah heard some one knocking at the door of his room and when he opened it, there stood the Cadi's black *aga*, and in his hand was a big package of rags. "Well, my fine adventurer," said the *aga* and grinned, "the Cadi sends you his greetings and begs that you will return the robe he lent you yesterday to play the part of the Prince of Basra. Here is your old coat, and here are the rest of your rags, so that you can put on your own clothes once more."

Fadlallah was much surprised at this speech, which for the first time revealed to him all the Cadi's malice. But he gave the *aga* the Cadi's robe and turban and put on his ragged gown. In the meantime the beautiful Zemrude, who had heard part of the conversation, hurried up and when she saw Fadlallah covered with rags, cried, "What is the meaning of this transformation, and what did this fellow say to you?"

"My princess," answered Fadlallah, "the Cadi is a great scoundrel. But he has himself fallen into the pit he dug in his malice. He thinks that he has given you a wretched beggar for a husband—in reality he has wedded you to a prince. I am no lower in rank than the husband you supposed you were marrying. The Prince of Basra's position is in no way superior to

mine. I am the only son of the great Bin-Ortok, Sultan of Mosul, and my name is Fadlallah." Then he told her his story without concealing anything. When he had concluded, the beautiful Zemrude flung her arms about him and assured him that even though he had not been a great king's son, she would have loved him. She then at once sent out slaves to purchase rich clothing, and they soon returned with finer robes and a more valuable turban of Indian muslin than the one Fadlallah already had worn. Thereupon Fadlallah, following Muaffak's advice, went to the Commander of the Faithful, the Caliph, disclosed his name and rank and told his story, without concealing any of the details of the Cadi's hatefulness and malice. The Caliph listened to him with great kindness, reproached him with not having come to him sooner, and presented him with a robe of honor and a handsome diamond ring, which he wore on his hand. After he had been entertained in the palace with delicious sorbet, Fadlallah, when he returned to Muaffak's house, found that the Caliph had sent him as a wedding gift six heavy bales of Persian gold and silver brocades, two pieces of damask, and a handsome Persian horse, magnificently caparisoned. In addition the Caliph restored to Muaffak the governorship of Bagdad. And, when Prince Fadlallah set out to return to Mosul with his beautiful young wife, the Commander of the Faithful gave him an escort of three thousand of his bodyguard to pro-

tect him on the way. In Mosul, the son of the great Bin-Ortuk lived long and happily with the beautiful Zemrude.

As to the hateful Cadi, who had tried to play so low and unworthy a trick on Zemrude and her father—Blessed be Allah the beneficent, who does not permit the evil sown by the iniquitous to bear fruit!—he was deprived of his office and sent to prison. There he had time to reflect how easy it is while digging a pit for others, to fall into it one's self.



THE LOCK IN THE XA XA CAVERN

*(An Arabian Nights' Tale as Told in Seventeenth
Century Europe)*

ONCE upon a time there lived in Europe a magician by the name of Mattetai, who was so skilled in the art of magic that he could discover all buried treasures and use them as he chose. Yet he was not satisfied with this knowledge. He had read in an ancient book that in the African cavern of Xa Xa there was hidden a key-lock which would make its possessor the happiest man on earth, and allow him to gratify his every wish, for the earth spirits were bound to this talisman and had to do whatever the owner of the lock desired. So Mattetai's mouth began to water after this most desirable treasure. Yet, in order to obtain the lock, all sorts of formalities were first necessary. These Mattetai did not know. He had a ring, however, to which the air spirits were bound; so rubbing it on his finger he summoned them. At once three of them appeared and asked the magician what he wished. Said Mattetai, "I would like to obtain the priceless lock in the Xa Xa Cavern, and I wish your help in obtaining it." The air spirits answered,

"Force will not aid you there, for the lock is guarded by the earth spirits, who are more powerful than we are. But if you use cunning, you may get the better of them and secure the lock." "Very well," said Mattetai, "and how do I go about it?" Said the air spirits, "You must do exactly as your ancient book tells you. First of all, you need a Turkish boy. He must be an innocent youth and must carry out all the orders you give him, according to the book's directions." Mattetai picked up the book, read what he needed to know, and finally jumped up and said to the air spirits, "That's that! And now take me to Constantinople, where I hope to find that for which I am looking."

At once the willing spirits seized him, and carrying him through the air he found himself, after a few moments had passed, in Asia, where they set him down on the ground a short distance from the city of Constantinople. Here Mattetai dismissed the spirits, entered the city and wandered through a number of streets until he came across a boy who seemed to have all the qualities needed for carrying out his plan. He was the poor, motherless son of a day laborer, named Lameth. Mattetai went up to him as he was playing with some boys of his own age in the gutter, gave him a kindly greeting and said, "Where does your father live?" "Not far from here," said Lameth, and when Mattetai begged him to take him to his father, whose

name was Achim, he did so at once. Mattetai was very polite to Achim, and asked him whether he could engage Lameth as a guide and servant for the time of his stay in Constantinople. He would be glad to pay a fixed sum for his services every day, he said, in order that he might show him the streets to which business called him. A stranger like himself felt lost in such an immense city. When Achim asked him where he was staying Mattetai said, "I have just entered the town, and would be glad to have you tell me where I might find a lodging." So Achim showed him a neighboring house and said, "There they will serve you well and since it is nearby, my son will be close at hand when you want him."

Mattetai thanked Achim for his advice and presented him with a gold ducat. Then he fixed Lameth's wages, and even said that he would maintain him altogether at his own expense if he served him faithfully. When Achim heard him mention sums of money which he himself could not earn in a month's hard labor, and which the boy was to receive every day at the cost of little exertion, he thanked the god of Mohammed in his heart. His greatest wish was that Mattetai might stay in Constantinople a long, long time. The very first day of his services Mattetai gave Lameth a gold ducat, though he had done but little, and Lameth, full of joy, brought it at once to his father. The next day the magician sent for a tailor and bought a neat new

robe for Lameth, at the same time hiring two good horses. Mounted on these they rode through Constantinople and saw everything worth seeing, returning in the evening. Then Lameth received his ducat and after supper was sent home to his father, laden with food. In this way Achim lived like a lord for fourteen days, without doing a stroke of work, and wished that Mattetai would stay in Constantinople for the rest of his days.

But such was not Mattetai's intention. On the fifteenth day he ordered Lameth to hire two good horses, and then told him that having seen the whole city, he would now ride out into the country and see what it was like. Early in the morning Mattetai and Lameth mounted and rode off, and when they were a few miles away from Constantinople the magician guided his horse into the woods. "Master," said Lameth, "let us follow the highway, or we will be lost!" But Mattetai answered, "Follow me! The sun is so hot that I would rather ride in the shade of the trees. It will be easy enough to find the highway later." With these words he spurred on his horse and darted off so swiftly that Lameth could hardly follow him as he galloped over bush and hedge, and thick and thin. At last the boy was at the end of his strength. He called on the magician to stop, which Mattetai finally did, in a barren place. Here he dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, and ordered Lameth to do the same.

While Lameth, glad of the rest, lay down and tried to catch his breath, Mattetai drew a great book from his knapsack, spread it open on the grass, and began to read. Then he turned the ring on his finger and muttered something in his beard. At once three air spirits stood before him and asked his commands. Lameth, who had never seen anything like this in all his days, nearly died of fright; but Mattetai raised him up and said, "Do not fear, my son, not a hair of your head shall be hurt! If you will only do as I say, you will never regret it, for I will make you so rich that you will thank me all your life long." Thus he soothed the boy; then addressing one of the air spirits, "Take the two horses and return them to their owner. You, however," and he turned to the two others, "shall take me and my trusty servant safely to Africa to the famous Xa Xa Cavern."

In a moment they were seized by the spirits, carried through the air and in the twinkling of an eye they were in Africa, where they were set down on a large hill. Here Mattetai dismissed his air spirits, and once more took forth his book and read in it. Next he produced flint and steel, which he carried with him, lit a fire and drew a magic circle around it. Thereupon he strewed incense in the flames and murmured a few cabalistic words. When he had done this a great noise and tumult arose within the hill, as though it were thundering; and then the whole hill burst open

with a terrible crash and many fiery flames shot out from the cavern. When this had happened, Mattetai left the circle and went to Lameth, who was so overcome by terror that he no longer knew whether he were alive or dead. He took the boy, who had sunk to the ground, by the arm, lifted him up and said, "Dear Lameth, the time has come when you can make both of us happy for the rest of our lives. You must enter yonder opening in the hill, and if you follow my instructions no harm will come to you. First, take this ring—and he thrust a ring on his finger—and as you value your life, do not lose it nor let anyone take it, for so long as it is on your finger, nothing can harm you. Then go cheerfully into the cavern and walk straight ahead through the long, dark passage, turning neither to the right nor to the left. If anyone call you do not even look around. When you step from the dark passage, you will come to three rooms, full of gold, silver, precious stones and other costly objects. Be careful not to touch any of them, but go straight ahead until you reach a fair garden, filled with sweet-fruited trees. Pick as many of the fruits as you wish, if it please you, but do not linger too long, or the time during which the cavern remains open will pass. Then hurry on until you find a great lock with a key hanging by a string of pearls from a marble column. Cut the pearl string in two, shove it quickly into your pocket, together with the lock and key, and run right back the

way you came. Let nothing whatever hinder you, but hurry back to me without saying a word!"

Lameth was terrified by this strange speech, and could not make up his mind to undertake so dangerous a task. Yet Mattetai besought him with the greatest earnestness, and drew a picture of the glorious life he could lead if he obeyed. But when Lameth still refused, the magician feared the right hour would pass, and then nothing in the world would enable him to obtain what he wished. So he grew angry, seized Lameth by the collar, cast him to the ground and said, "I will kill you if you do not do as I say!" Then Lameth begged for mercy and promised to do all that was demanded of him. The magician now once more became friendly, dusted him off, strengthened him with the powerful medicaments he carried, and accompanied him to the hill. There he bade the boy enter the cleft in the rock which led into the cavern, and once he had gone in, Mattetai sat down before it and awaited his return with anxiety.

Lameth, his master's warnings in mind, went straight on through the passage. Suddenly it grew light, and he found himself in a room full of all sorts of silver vessels, handsomely chiselled with flowers. Lameth did not realize their value. To him they looked no better than ordinary metal. He touched none of them, but pushed on. He now came to another room, where stood baskets and basins made of pure gold, and which

contained precious stones, pearls and other jewels. Lameth knew still less about these things. Then he entered a third room, entirely filled with gold and silver coins, which were piled up in heaps like corn. Lameth knew very well what coins were. He was almost overcome by the temptation to stuff his pockets with them, but remembered Mattetai's warning just in time, and fearing death would reward his disobedience, he hurried forward. Now he found himself in the lovely, smiling garden of which he had been told. There stood many trees, all adorned with translucent, glimmering fruits, white, yellow, green and red in color. He looked at them with wonder and longing. He knew, too, that he could pluck as many of them as he wished. Yet he did not think they were real fruits, but only artfully cut and colored glass. He commenced filling his pockets with them and then suddenly recalled the magician's warning not to lose much time lest the cavern close upon him. At once he hurried on and soon saw the marble column from which the magic lock hung from a string of pearls. As soon as he caught sight of it he ran up, cut the pearl string and tried to cram it into his pocket. But his pockets were already full of the wonderful fruits he had picked. So without further thought, he took off his turban, unrolled it and carefully hid the lock and the string of pearls in it. Then he once more wound it firmly around his head, and ran back along the path he had



He now came to another room, where stood baskets and basins made of pure gold, and which contained precious stones, pearls, and other jewels.

followed more quickly than he had come. But the rooms and gardens through which he ran reëchoed with so terrible a howling, rumbling and crackling that every hair on his head stood on end, and he thought Gehenna had opened and pulled down the firmament with it. He was glad when he once more found himself in the narrow passage; but this, which before had been pitch-dark, now glowed like fire, and for quite a time Lameth did not dare to venture near the flames. When he dared delay no longer, however, he ran straight through them and found that they cooled instead of burned him. He now was quite happy, for the light of day already showed through the opening of the cavern, and in a few minutes he hoped to be free of his troubles and once more his own master. And then, suddenly, there was a great crash, like a mighty thunderbolt, the cavern closed and it grew so dark that it was impossible to see. Lameth groped about to find the path, and finally reached the place where the opening had been. But now there was no trace of it, and Lameth was obliged to admit to himself that he was buried alive in the earth.

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While Lameth was in the cavern, Mattetai waited outside for him to return and bring him the magic lock. The time during which the cavern would remain open had well nigh gone by, and when the magician did not see the boy reappear, he almost fell into despair, for

well he knew that in a few moments his hopes would vanish forever. So he kept crying out in a pitiful manner, "Lameth, O Lameth, haste and delight the unhappy Mattetai with your presence!" Yet Lameth did not come, and now the magician abandoned himself to hopelessness; not alone had he lost the lock of the Xa Xa Cavern, but his wonderful magic ring as well. He was still calling, "Lameth, Lameth!" when the terrible crash was heard and a fiery flame shot out of the cave, which at once closed. The flame seized the magician, dragged him a mile and flung him into a great marsh, where he lay unconscious, stretched out like a frog, until the sun went down and the coolness awakened him. At first he knew not where he was or how he had gotten there. Little by little he recalled his misfortune, and once more bewailed the loss of his ring. With the aid of the spirits of the air he could have had himself taken back to Europe in a moment. He had dragged himself out of the marsh, but lay in the deepest darkness, and around him the wild beasts roared so that he shivered. Yet he struck a light with his flint and since he still had his great book, which contained many magic secrets, he turned its pages. To his great joy he hit upon an incantation by means of which the spirits of the water could be invoked. He did not lose a moment in reciting it and, behold, two obedient spirits at once stood before him. They shook themselves heavily and asked his pleasure. "Tell me

in which part of the world I now am?" asked Mattetai. "In Africa," they replied. "Then I command that you at once take me safely to Europe." The spirits placed Mattetai on their ankles, shot through the seas with him like lightning, and put him ashore in Europe.

Mattetai was glad to be back in that part of the world in which he had been born. With much difficulty and inconvenience, and mourning his misfortunes, he made his way to his native land. There he did all he could to forget the loss of his ring. And, after all, he could afford to do so, for his magic arts made him master of all earth's treasures, and he could use and enjoy them as he chose.

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In Constantinople, meanwhile, the honest day laborer Achim looked everywhere for his son Lameth and could not find him. He went to the man from whom Lameth had hired the horses: the horses had returned without any one riding them. He went to Mattetai's lodgings, but found neither master nor servant. When the second and third day passed and Lameth did not return, Achim gave up hope, cursed Mattetai as a scoundrel and deceiver, and wished that the pox might take him.

Lameth was still locked up in the Xa Xa Cavern, crying that he was a poor boy buried alive who did not know how to get out of his grave. At last he ran back into the cavern, hoping to reach the handsome

rooms and the garden, thinking they might show him a way out. But he was disappointed; the doors were firmly bolted and he had to return. Running back and forth had tired him, he was hungry, thirsty and discouraged. Sitting down on a little rock he happened to remember some food which Mattetai had entrusted to his care. He ate, then stretched out on the ground and fell asleep. While he slept he dreamed a delightful dream. He had escaped from his living grave and was once more home with his father. When he awoke he had no idea that he had slept for seventy-two hours on a stretch. He now wept louder than before, called on his father, wrung his hands and as he did so and without knowing it, he turned the ring which Mattetai had put on his finger. In a moment the cavern was filled with light, and two air spirits who had formerly served the magician stood before him. Lameth first was somewhat frightened, but knowing from experience they would not harm him, he listened to what they said. "What do you wish of us? What can we do for you?" they asked. "Alas," sighed Lameth, "I wish I were out of this prison and home with my father!" "Lameth, Lameth," replied one of the spirits, "if you knew the good fortune you hold in your hands, you would think yourself better off than the Turkish emperor! Be content. Since the earth spirits are also your servants, we may serve you as well, and your wish shall be granted." With that

the Xa Xa Cavern suddenly opened with a great crash, and the air spirits seized the boy and flew like the wind with him to Constantinople, where they put him down before his father's house. He thanked them and went in.

Old Achim sat there sadly mourning his son's loss, when suddenly Lameth stood before him. Achim fell on his neck with the greatest joy, crying "Lameth, Lameth, where have you been so long? And what has become of your kind master?" "Dear father," answered Lameth, "say not another word about that scoundrel and magician Mattetai. Instead give me something to eat, for I am hungry. Since I left you only a few bits of sugar-cane have passed my lips!" Achim, who still had money remaining from the wages paid the boy by Mattetai, ran to the tavern and returned with plenty to eat and drink. At first Achim could not believe Lameth's story, but when the latter unrolled his turban and brought out the lock together with the string of pearls, and then emptied his pockets, showing the beautiful, transparent fruits which he had plucked from the trees of the magic garden beneath the earth, Achim had to admit that his son had not been dreaming, but telling the truth.

Yet the beautiful fruits seemed no more than colored glass to Achim and his son, nor did they think the lock different from any ordinary lock. But because father and son, ever since Mattetai had made his ap-

pearance, had been used to easy living and no toil, they had gotten out of the habit of working. When all their money had been spent, though, they had to do something. One day Lameth brought out his lock and said, "Mattetai must have been a great simpleton to take so much trouble and dare so many dangers for the sake of this bit of rubbish." His father laughed and answered, "You are right, it was hardly worth his while to make such a fuss about a rusty old lock." Achim took the lock from his son's hand, wiped the dust from it and turned the key. It was firmly locked, and he had to put forth all his strength to unlock it. When at last it turned with a loud snap, a giant spirit at once stood before him and asked, "What do you demand of me?"

Achim was so frightened by this apparition that he tumbled down on the floor in a faint. Lameth, fortunately, had taken the priceless lock from his hand, and, being used to spirits, was quite calm. "I am hungry. Bring me something to eat," he at once answered. The spirit disappeared for a moment, and then returned with two great silver bowls filled with fresh and candied fruits, which he placed before Lameth, adding, "Is there anything else you wish?" "Yes, indeed," answered the boy, "I also wish something to drink." So the spirit at once brought a dozen bottles of the best sorbet in a great silver kettle and asked what further commands Lameth chose to give.

"Nothing more for the present," said Lameth, relocking his lock and putting it back in its place. Although he wondered more or less about this strange happening, his ignorance and simplicity prevented his hitting upon the reason for its occurrence.

Seeing that Achim still lay unconscious on the floor, Lameth took one of the bottles of sorbet and sprinkled his face. Achim's first glance, when he came to, fell on the silver bowls of fruit. He could not imagine how they came to be there until Lameth had explained. First Achim hesitated to eat and drink what the spirit had brought, but soon, seeing that Lameth was enjoying everything with a good appetite, he joined him. Again father and son lived on what the spirit had supplied until it was gone.

Then, one day, for Achim had by now quite forgotten how to work, he said to Lameth, "Lameth, go and sell one of the silver bowls. We cannot eat it as it is." Lameth was willing, put the bowl in his gown, and set out for the tinsmith, for he thought it was made of some base metal. On the way he met an Armenian who asked him where he was going with the bowl. "I want to sell it," answered Lameth. His questioner led him into an empty alley, examined the bowl and asked Lameth his price. "You are the best judge of its value," said the latter, "tell me what you will give for it." The other looked over the bowl from bottom to rim and finally said, "I will give you

twelve silver lion dollars for it. It is really worth less," he added, "but I like the workmanship." Lameth, happy to get so much money, ran back to his father with it and Achim, who knew no more than his son about the true worth of the bowl, was also pleased with the profitable sale. Soon they disposed of the second bowl to the purchaser of the first, and then came the turn of the great silver kettle. But the kettle was so heavy that Lameth did not try to carry it beneath his robe; he took it up on his head and carried it openly through the streets. As he went his way he met a goldsmith, who asked him where he was going with the kettle. "I am going to an Armenian who will buy it from me," answered Lameth. "Well," replied the goldsmith, "I doubt if he will give you much for it." And he asked him what he had received for the bowls, which he had seen him carry past. And when Lameth told him he cried, "Each one of those bowls was worth at least a hundred silver lion dollars!" Lameth thought the goldsmith was poking fun at him and said, "Well, then, what is this kettle worth?" The goldsmith weighed it in his hands, examined it carefully and finally answered, "I will give you five hundred silver lion dollars for it." Lameth could hardly believe he was still in his own skin, hearing this great sum of money mentioned. When the goldsmith told him to show the kettle to another goldsmith, and that if the latter offered him more he would be willing to meet

his price, Lameth would not take another step. He handed the goldsmith the kettle, stuffed the five hundred silver lion dollars in a bag, and ran home with the money on his head like a greyhound. When he found his father he was quite out of breath. He flung the bag on the table so that it burst and the dollars rolled all around the room. "See, father, what a haul I have made!" he cried. "The first man cheated us, and if I had gone in the first place to the honest goldsmith who bought the kettle, I would have received much more for my two bowls." But old Achim said, "Feel no regret, my son, but rejoice to think you sold the great kettle to such advantage! Now we will take better care of our money, for such a piece of luck will never again happen to us." Lameth was quite content to have it so, only asking for a little of the money with which to buy better clothes, while four hundred silver lion dollars were laid away for future needs.

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One day Lameth happened to feel like going out into the country a little ways. And while he was admiring the summer palaces of the Turkish emperor, which lay without the city limits, he heard the cannon thunder in the distance. This was the signal for all men to withdraw, because the Grand Seignior's women were on the way to one of the summer palaces. Though he knew very well that to disobey this command meant death, he could not resist the temptation to watch the

procession without himself being seen. Happening to notice a hollow tree by the roadside, in which he could hide, he got into it and found himself so well-concealed that no one suspected his hiding-place. Thus he was able to watch the whole cortège file past him. And then, contrary to all expectations, it happened that the litter of the sultan's daughter, the Princess Bellastra, crashed into that very tree, so that she fell to earth and fainted. At once attendants and servants surrounded the litter and devoted themselves to the princess. Her veil was removed, costly essences were sprinkled on her brow, and finally she was recalled to consciousness.

Lameth could see all this. With the loveliness of Princess Bellastra beneath his eyes he forgot everything. He kept poking his head out of the tree, and if those who hurried to the princess' aid had not been so busy caring for her, he would surely have been discovered and lost. Yet by good fortune, as soon as the Princess Bellastra recovered, the entire procession turned around to take her back to her father's palace. Lameth sat in his hollow tree and looked after the princess as long as she was visible. And when she disappeared from sight, he wrung his hands and cried, "Bellastra, Bellastra, loadstar of my life! Whither are you vanishing? Without you I must die!" And thus wringing his hands, he turned the ring on his finger. At once an air spirit appeared and said, "Lameth, what is your desire?" Surprised as Lameth was by the spir-

it's appearance, he frankly replied, "Ah, I have fallen desperately in love with the Princess Bellastra! Can you aid me to gain her hand?" "No," replied the air spirit. "It is not in the power of air spirits to aid you. Yet do not despair, Lameth. You are the owner of the wonderful lock of the Xa Xa Cavern, which makes the earth spirits obey you. They will help you attain your wish if you handle the matter in the right way."

When the spirit said this Lameth woke as though from a dream. For the first time he realized what a wonderful treasure he possessed in the magic lock, which hitherto he had hardly noticed; and he now knew that his ring gave him command of the spirits of the air. He dismissed the spirit cheerfully and went home, to spend most of his time thinking how best he might attempt to win the hand of the sultan's daughter. One day, when his father, who noticed how quiet he had become, asked what was the matter, Lameth told him that he loved the Princess Bellastra, and begged his father to obtain an audience from the Grand Seignior and demand the princess' hand for his son. "Insensate one," cried Achim in a rage, "how am I to appear before His Majesty with such a laughable demand! First of all, one cannot appear before the sultan without a gift, and even if we spent all our money we could buy nothing worth his notice." But Lameth merely smiled. "Father," he said, "do not worry about

the matter. I have grown older and wiser and know what I am able to do. The stones which I possess, and which formerly I thought of no account, are not glass. They are precious stones, such as great lords value highly; and all the jewels which the Princess Bellastra wore in her hair and on her breast, seemed only fit for children compared with mine. Therefore, dear father, unless you wish to see me die, do as I ask, present my plea, and let the rest be my affair."

Achim, who loved his son, finally yielded. On the following morning he set out to visit the sultan, and Lameth gave him for the purpose twelve various colored stones of medium size chosen from among his jewels. These he laid in neat order in a little basket, covered them with a clean cloth and handed it to his father. He also told him how to answer the questions the sultan would probably put to him. In addition he gave him a handsome red stone to press into the hand of the court official who introduced the people into the Grand Seignior's audience chamber. The old father went off sad at heart, for he could see no good coming of all this foolishness. At last he came to the hall of audience, but found no more attention was paid him than if he had not been there. At last he caught one of the court officials who called the people in to see the sultan by the sleeve, quickly pressed the red stone into his palm and begged for an audience. The official secretly glanced at the stone in the hollow of his

hand, and saw that it was a ruby of great value. He immediately looked at Achim with a friendlier face, let all the other more highly-placed audience-seekers wait, and brought the old day laborer into the sultan's presence.

Achim flung himself to the ground before the sultan and said, "All-powerful Sultan! I take the liberty of bringing Your Majesty a trifling gift from my son, who would like to commend himself to your favor." The Grand Seignior had the little basket shown him and when the cloth was withdrawn, there lay twelve magnificent jewels sparkling beneath his eyes. In his astonishment he did not know what to say, for although he possessed the greatest treasure in the world, he had no jewels as magnificent as these; in fact he had never yet seen jewels so perfect in every way. He gave orders for every one to leave the room and then, showing his grand vizier the basket, asked, "What do you think of this gift?" The grand vizier fell silent when he saw how splendid the stones were. He kept looking at the man who had presented them and finally said, "Lord Sultan, I cannot get through my head how this man comes to be the owner of such treasures." Then the sultan asked Achim who his son was. "My son," replied the latter, "brought his treasures from Africa. He possesses such riches that Your Majesty need only command what you wish done and he will have it attended to." "And you have nothing else to say?"

asked the Grand Seignior. Achim shrugged his shoulders and stammered, "All-powerful monarch! If Your Majesty would promise to lend a gracious ear to what I say, I would venture to present my son's plea." "Speak," said the sultan, "and tell me what he desires. No harm shall come to you, so speak freely and openly."

Then Achim began, "All-powerful lord and Sultan! I must admit to Your Majesty that my son Lameth loves your daughter the Princess Bellastra, and wishes me to humbly present his suit, with the assurance that he will offer whatever dower Your Majesty may choose to name." The courtiers present could not help but laugh at Achim's words and the grand vizier, whose son had for some time past cherished hopes of obtaining the princess' hand, whispered in the sultan's ear, "All-powerful monarch! How can Your Majesty marry your daughter to the first vagabond who comes along!" But the sultan glanced in the little basket and answered, "Achim, tell your son to present himself before me six months from this day." Achim was well satisfied with this favorable answer, as was Lameth, and the latter decided to wait quietly until the six months had passed.

But, as may be imagined, the grand vizier lost no time, and the sultan, who soon forgot queer old Achim and the promise he had made him, consented to have the grand vizier's son marry his daughter. Great

preparations were made for the nuptials, and though the news saddened Achim, Lameth was undisturbed and encouraged his father. In the meantime the day drew near when, according to the Turkish custom, Bellastra was to be betrothed to the grand vizier's son. But Lameth seemed so unconcerned that Achim thought he had given up his fantastic hope of marrying the sultan's daughter.

That same evening, however, Lameth locked himself in his room, and turning his ring summoned an air spirit and said to him, "I wish you would go to the palace of the Grand Seignior, and when the grand vizier's son is about to enter the apartments of the Princess Bellastra, seize him and carry him off to Damascus. There you may set him down in a laurel wood and guard him until further orders." The spirit did exactly as Lameth had ordered. In vain the lovely Bellastra waited for her betrothed, and when she told her father that she had not even seen the grand vizier's son, the sultan grew angry, sent for the grand vizier and said, "What, has your son so little respect for his betrothed that he does not even visit her?" The grand vizier assured the sultan that his son had left home to visit the princess, but that he had not been seen since. Search was made for the lost bridegroom everywhere, but not a trace of him could be found; and so the day of the wedding passed by and Bellastra's betrothal was declared null and void.

When three months had passed without news of the grand vizier's son, the son of the grand admiral ventured to sue for Bellastra's hand. His suit was approved by the sultan, and new wedding preparations were made. Lameth, quite undisturbed, though he knew all about the matter, let the betrothal take place and then, when the bridegroom was about to go to his bride, had him carried off by an air spirit to Cairo in Egypt, and set down in an orange-grove, to be guarded there until further orders. Again Bellastra awaited her promised husband, in vain. She wept and lamented her misfortune, and the Grand Seignior shook his head sorrowfully and saw there was some mystery in this constant disappearance of his daughter's bridegrooms. Yet, since there was nothing to be done, the time went by until Lameth's six months were up.

When that day arrived, Lameth said to his father, "Father, it is time to remind the sultan of his promise and to hear his decision with regard to my suit." So he laid twelve other precious stones in a basket, the largest and most beautiful he had, and to them added the string of pearls on which the lock had hung: the pearls he sent as a special present for Bellastra. "Go now, dear father," he said, "and return soon with an answer which will make me happy." The old man went, and when the sultan saw him in the audience chamber he remembered his promise, sent all others out of the room and asked Achim what he desired.

Achim cast himself to the ground and cried, "King of the World! My son Lameth begs that you will look with favor on him, and seeing that six months now have gone by, that you will grant the humble plea he has already made. He has sent the jewels in this basket to you as a trifling gift, and ventures at the same time to lay this string of pearls at the Princess Bellastra's feet."

The sultan had the basket handed to him and when he saw the costly jewels he started up and cried, "What king sends me such gems?" Then he sent for his counsellors, and advised with them as to what to do. He said that although he did not know the person who sent him these magnificent gifts, it was clear he must be the richest man in the empire. The grand vizier, however, still discontented because the Princess Bellastra had not been given to his son, said, "All-powerful monarch! Do as you see fit, yet in my opinion it would be well to put this person to a test before you promise him your daughter's hand. Let him produce the bridal dower he has offered you. If he does so then we will know that he is really as wealthy as he seems to be."

This proposal pleased the sultan. He returned to the audience chamber and said to Achim, "Go back to your son and say that I have received his gifts with favor. Say also that if he gives me for my daughter's bridal dower six camels laden with gold and six camels

laden with silver, six white slaves, each carrying a bag of the costliest Persian stuffs, and six black slaves each bearing a basket of jewels like those he already has sent me, then he shall become my son-in-law."

When Achim heard this, he bowed sadly and went home, his mind full of sorrowful thoughts. The Grand Seignior, however, went to his daughter Bellastra and handing her the splendid string of pearls, said: "An unknown man is suing for your hand. He has sent me gifts so valuable that I have never yet seen their like, and to-day he brought me this string of pearls. What do you think of it?" Bellastra took the pearls and examined them. The string was so long that it passed six times around her neck, and then six times around each of her wrists. Every pearl was beautiful, large, round and without fault, and all were perfectly matched. Then the princess said to her father, "I should like to know the person who possesses such treasures. I do not believe there is another string of pearls like this in all the world." To this the sultan agreed adding, "I regret I gave him an answer which really makes his suit hopeless. I have asked him to supply a bridal dower which it is quite impossible for him to furnish." And when he told the princess what he had demanded, she grew very sad and cried, "I see that I am fated never to marry!"

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When Lameth's father returned his son impatiently

asked him what he had accomplished. Said Achim, "Son, you are as likely to gain the hand of the Princess Bellastra as you are to pluck the stars from the heavens!" And he told him what the sultan wanted for a bridal dower. But Lameth did not let his father finish. "Is that all the sultan wants?" he cried. "I think you have lost your mind," said Achim, "for if you could turn all the paving-stones of Constantinople into gold, silver and jewels, you would not have enough to meet the sultan's demand." But Lameth only laughed, and told his father to wait and see: "Wait but a few hours. To-morrow I know you will change your mind." And, since evening had come, he went calmly to bed and told his father to be sure to rise early the next day. He himself got up before dawn, took his magic lock, turned the key in the key-hole, and thus called forth the earth spirits, who appeared with the utmost willingness. "Worthy possessor of the admirable lock," said they, "what is your desire?" Lameth quickly replied, "That you at once bring me six camels laden with gold and six with silver, then six black slaves each carrying a silver bowl full of jewels, and six white slaves, each bearing a bag of Persian fabrics, shawls and European laces, from the Xa Xa Cavern." "It shall be done at once," the earth spirits gladly replied, and before sunrise they returned with all Lameth had demanded.

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Achim, who was still sleeping, was awakened by the noise the slaves and camels made. Opening his window he was not a little surprised to see all for which the sultan had called before his eyes. He ran breathlessly downstairs to his son to tell him the joyful news, and Lameth laughed and said, "Well, was it much trouble for me to satisfy the Grand Seignior's request? Now set out with and deliver to the sultan the treasures he asked for, and tell him that I value them far less than the happiness of winning the hand of the beautiful Bellastra." Achim thought he was dreaming as he led the procession to the sultan's palace. The people were astounded at the sight, and hurried after the loaded beasts and slaves. When they neared the sultan's palace and the guards saw the crowds they thought a revolt had broken out, closed the gates and sent word to the Grand Seignior. The latter came to a palace window, and looked anxiously out until he realized that this was the bridal dower he had demanded for his daughter. He at once sent for Achim, who delivered everything to him in his son Lameth's name, recommending him to his favor.

Then the sultan sent for his daughter Bellastra, while the slaves entered and laid down their costly burdens at her feet. The chests full of gold and silver were too heavy to be unloaded and brought to the sultan on the spot, so the camels took them off to the treasury. The sultan examined the precious stones and the costly

fabrics, most of them unknown to him and of incalculable value, and finally said to his daughter, "Well, what of your husband-to-be? Do you think that this time he will prove worthy of you?" And Bellastra answered, "If I am to judge by what I now see he must be the wealthiest and happiest man in the world." Then the Grand Seignior called together all his counsellors and showed them the bridal dower. All were silent, and not even the grand vizier ventured to say a word. Thereupon the sultan broke the silence, went to Achim and said to him, "Return to your son, and say that I greet him as my daughter's husband-to-be. Let him not delay coming to the palace, for the sooner I see him the more pleased I shall be."

Achim, nearly beside himself with pleasure, took his departure, ran all the way home like a young deer, and gave Lameth the sultan's message. The latter could scarcely contain himself for joy. "Father," he cried, "before all else we must now equip ourselves in a proper and befitting manner to pay our respects to the Grand Seignior!" He went into his room, summoned the earth spirits with the aid of his lock, and said to them, "Bring me first of all a handsome English horse to ride; and then clothes splendid enough to do honor to a sultan's son-in-law; and after that a distinguished suite, so that I may enter the palace to the sound of kettledrums and trumpets!"

The earth spirits went to work with a will. But

first of all, and without his having asked for it, they led the master of the lock into the bath of wisdom. When he had plunged into it he was in a single moment so changed that in figure, manners, virtues and wisdom there was no longer his equal on earth, and he was at once endowed with all the qualities which a great lord by rights should have. Then they brought him home again, where all was prepared for the adornment of Achim and himself, and where, with the aid of the attendant spirits, they were soon ready to set forth. Lameth wore a magnificent *kaftan* lined with ermine and with diamond buttons, such as the sultan himself had never put on. He mounted the noble English steed awaiting him with great dignity, and surrounded by a number of slaves on foot and on horseback, rode with his following to the sultan's court. Achim led the procession with outriders, and in the middle was Lameth, on his English horse, which danced along in the most graceful manner, so that all eyes were fixed upon him, and all had to admit they had never seen anything like it. The procession closed with a number of servitors wearing frontlets of gold-foil and silver-foil on which were engraved Lameth's name, and which reflected the sun's rays in so dazzling a manner that those who looked at them had to turn away their eyes.

The sultan heard the sound of kettledrums and trumpets in the distance, and finally saw the procession itself

draw near. Yet he did not recognize Achim, the old day laborer, in his rich garments until the latter dismounted, prostrated himself before the Grand Seignior, and announced Lameth's arrival. Lameth drew near the palace and made as though to dismount before the outer gate, but two palace attendants, coming up with great respect, led his horse into the courtyard, and there helped him dismount. When he had ascended the stairs the Grand Seignior embraced him and led him to a room where stood the Princess Bellastra in all the radiance of her beauty. Lameth fell at her feet and said, "With your imperial father's permission your slave ventures to fling himself at your feet, humbly to offer you his love, and beg that you will return it." Bellastra bashfully gave him her hand and answered, "Whatever my father may have promised in my name that must I do. Yet I assure you, that I do it without being compelled, and only wish that you may be more fortunate than others who have sued for my hand." Lameth understood this last remark only too well, yet he controlled himself and commended himself to Bellastra's kindness and favor.

And now the trumpets called all to the banquet. The sultan and the day laborer sat on one side of the table, Lameth and Bellastra on the other, and were served by the great lords of the court. Lameth had in his suite all sorts of musicians, who played African, Indian and European airs in turn, and so pleased the

sultan and his daughter that they forgot to eat and drink. Lameth himself acted in the most genteel way, and answered all the sultan's questions in so intelligent a manner that the latter took a great liking to him. But Bellastra often sighed and said to herself, "I do hope my betrothed will not share the fate of my two other suitors." The day of the wedding was fixed, and when the sultan offered to give the couple a suite of rooms in his palace, Lameth begged him to let him build a suitable mansion himself, opposite the palace of the Grand Signior.

To this the sultan agreed, and when evening came Lameth took leave with his suite, his attendants being assigned quarters by the sultan in the neighborhood. Before he went to bed, by means of his ring and lock, Lameth assembled air spirits and earth spirits and said to them, "I herewith command you, without making a sound, to build me a new palace opposite the sultan's palace this very night, one more magnificent than any in existence. It must have four gates and a commodious inner court; the rooms and halls must all be laid out regularly and be well furnished; the stables filled with handsome and valuable horses; kitchens and cellars supplied with all the necessary equipment, foods and beverages; and the treasure-chamber must hold plenty of coined money. All that a royal court demands should be richly provided. If you do this it will give me particular pleasure."

The spirits at once set to work and did as Lameth had ordered. A wondrous palace of white, blue, red and green striped marble rose in the air; what ordinarily was made of iron, in this palace was artfully wrought of gold and silver; and the rooms within were equipped with the costliest furniture, such as it would be impossible to see elsewhere. And this whole great palace was built so silently that the sentinel standing guard before the sultan's palace across the way had not the slightest knowledge of what was going on and, since it was a very dark night, could not even see what was happening.

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Now the sultan was an old gentleman, who did not sleep late in the morning. It was his habit, as soon as he rose, to step to the window to enjoy the cool morning breeze and the beautiful view, for he could overlook all Constantinople from his palace. The following morning he rose as usual, while it was still dark, and looked out of the window. And there, in the grey light, he saw something across the way which deprived him of his accustomed view. He rubbed his eyes, thinking that the morning mists were swimming before him. But when he looked again, it seemed to him that he could make out a great mansion or palace. As there had been nothing there the previous evening, he called down to the sentinel on guard below and asked him what was standing opposite, in the great

square. The sentinel replied that it seemed to be a great and magnificent palace. Filled with astonishment, the sultan sent one of his guards to the spot, who returned and reported that it was really a palace, more splendid than any the human eye had ever seen. Yet no one could tell how it had gotten there, for not a sound had been heard during the night. Yet the guard could not say enough about it, how it was all made of marble, jasper, porphyry and other beautifully polished stones, that all the window-fittings were of silver and all the window-panes of crystal.

The sultan was astonished, especially, when as it became lighter, the whole splendor of the palace was revealed to his sight. He sent for his daughter Bellastra and said to her, "You will not have to wait long to be married, for there stands the mansion which your husband has had built for you in the course of a single night." Bellastra was not a little surprised at the sight, yet she was glad at heart at the prospect of being united to Lameth so soon. Now the latter himself arrived with his lordly suite, established himself in the newly built palace, and found everything as well arranged as heart might wish. Naturally, he was greatly pleased, and praised his serviceable spirits. Then he sent the master of the household to the sultan with a most respectful greeting, to inform him that the new palace stood ready, and to ask whether His Majesty

would be pleased to have the betrothal ceremony take place in it.

The sultan sent back a gracious message and ordered all to be made ready for the ceremony. When Lameth was informed that Bellastra was awaiting him, he called for her with a far more splendid escort than his former one, and brought her, the Grand Seignior and his entire court to the new palace, whose magnificence they could not sufficiently admire. The ceremony was performed and then followed a splendid banquet, at which the sultan's table was served in dishes of pure gold and that of the court in dishes of silver. The sultan was dumbfounded, and admitted that he himself could not have done this. The most charming music was heard, and a special band of singers praised Bellastra's beauty and virtues to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. Thus the day went by in all sorts of pleasures. Lameth was happy by the side of his lovely bride, though she herself still secretly feared that her new-found husband might suddenly disappear like her other suitors.

Nothing of the sort happened, however, and the young pair led a happy and contented life in their beautiful home. The sultan was Lameth's best friend, and he won the hearts of great and small at court by his kindness and liberality. The poor and needy never applied to him in vain, and so widespread was his repu-

tation for charity that his palace was commonly known as the Castle of Aid.

Yet with all this Lameth's good fortune was not yet firmly established. Fate was still to deal him a hard blow. The evil magician Mattetai was living in Europe, and committing many iniquities, day by day. In the end, through his magic arts, he managed to compel the obedience of the air and earth spirits as before, and just as he had forced the water spirits to do his will, so he also became master of the fire spirits. One day he recalled the wonderful ring he had lost, and felt a desire to know what had happened with regard to the Xa Xa Cavern, and whether he could not regain the ring. So he summoned the fire spirits, who appeared angrily and showed that they did not enjoy being disturbed. They shook themselves until the sparks flew, and shouted at the magician in a horrible voice, "What do you want of us?" Mattetai said, "Is it possible for me to regain the wonderful ring I have lost, and obtain possession of the admirable lock in the Xa Xa Cavern?" The spirits answered, "That is not possible. We are not powerful enough to give them to you. Both are the property of Lameth, and he does not misuse them. And, since he is served by air and by earth spirits, we cannot openly deprive him of them."

When Mattetai heard this, he was not a little surprised. He had long since forgotten Lameth, and

thought he had turned to dust and ashes. So he cried, "What! Lameth living? And in addition the owner of the two greatest treasures on earth? What must I hear? Miserable wretch, I have not been able to do what he has done with all my magic arts, pains and labor. The scoundrel has got the better of me and robbed me of both treasures!" Mattetai acted like a madman, and carried on so that even the fire spirits felt sorry for him and said, "Mattetai, good fortune has favored Lameth, the good fortune you could not compel with all your magic arts! Yet do not despair. Perhaps cunning will win for you that which you desire. Lameth lives happily and in perfect peace of mind. He does not think of his lock, and lets it lie idly in some corner. Try and see whether you cannot take it from him: anything we will do to aid you will be gladly done." Mattetai once more felt happy, dismissed the fire spirits, and began to think over how he might obtain the wonderful talismans. He summoned the water spirits, who also obeyed him, and had himself carried through the sea to Constantinople. Here he hunted up comfortable lodgings and made inquiries about Lameth. All whom he questioned spoke well of Lameth: they praised his liberality and his other virtues, and told how he was beloved by his wife Bellastra, highly esteemed by his father-in-law, the sultan, and the grandees of his court, and honored by all the world in Constantinople. Mattetai gnashed his

teeth with rage at these reports; but controlled his bitterness, and had himself led to the spot where Lameth's beautiful palace stood.

Unfortunately, at that very moment Bellastra happened to be looking out of the window, and the old magician was so delighted with her beauty that he no longer thought of merely robbing poor Lameth of his ring and lock, but of his lovely wife as well. Yet, in order to do so, he needed the lock. He hurried back to his quarters, shut himself up in his room, summoned the fire spirits and begged them earnestly to help him obtain the lock. When they said they were willing he sent them to spy out the land, and they returned with the news that Lameth was not at home, but away on a hunting expedition, from which he would not return for several days. They also told him that the admirable lock lay in a bed-room on a velvet cushion. Mattetai scolded the spirits for not bringing it along with them at once, but they answered that it was not in their power to do so, and that they had not even dared approach it. Then Mattetai took his head in both hands and thought for a long time. At last he said to the spirits, "Listen! Early to-morrow morning provide me with a handsome retinue of servants, as well as a splendid Persian robe and a good saddle-horse for myself, and I will try my luck."

This the spirits promised to do, and the following morning there appeared ten Persian guards, who

brought with them a rich Persian dress and a fine horse for Mattetai. The latter was ready, and after he had given the fire spirits their instructions, rode off to the palace. He sent a servant before him, to announce that the Persian ambassador, an old friend of Lameth's, wished to see him. Bellastra sent word that she regretted her husband was away at the time, but that if the ambassador would wait a few days she would send messengers to her husband, who would at once return to enjoy his old friend's visit. Mattetai's servant, a fire spirit who had already been told what to say, answered, "My master will regret to receive your message. He is merely passing through Constantinople, and cannot remain in the city after this evening. Yet he begs that he may be permitted to have the honor of seeing his friend's magnificent palace, whose fame has travelled even to far-away Persia. The shah, his master, has ordered him to examine it, and bring back a detailed description of it."

Bellastra saw no harm in granting the stranger's request. She sent her master of the household to him, and had him taken through the palace. When Mattetai reached the room in which Bellastra was seated, he showed her every honor, kissed the hem of her garment and apologized for the trouble he was causing. Bellastra treated him with courtesy, and since Mattetai acted like a true courtier, she allowed him to see every room in the palace. When they came to Lameth's bed-

room, the palace servants hesitated to open it, declaring that it was not in order. But Mattetai insisted, saying that he had to make a complete plan of the building for his master (to make this plausible, he carried tablets in his hand, and made notes in every room). It would do him little credit, said he, if he had to deliver an incomplete plan. So they finally opened the room for him, and once in he began glancing around to discover the lock. As soon as he saw it he coughed loudly—this was the signal he had agreed to give the fire spirits—and at once a cry of “Fire, fire!” rang out in the courtyard below. In fact, flames were seen rising everywhere, and although the palace was solidly built of stone, it seemed to be burning all over, as though it were made of wood or some other inflammable material. Every one ran to put out the fire, and in the general confusion Mattetai seized the admirable lock of the Xa Xa Cavern and quickly slipped it into his pocket. Then he also ran and helped the spirits put out the fire, so that when the flames had disappeared, all thanked the Persian ambassador for his timely aid. Now the magician did not prolong his visit. He took leave of Bellastra, and rode contentedly back to his lodgings, for he now had the wonderful lock in his pocket. There he paid his bill, mounted and rode out of the city gates, and once he had reached the forest dismissed his band of spirits

in disguise. Then he made his way to the nearest village and awaited the night with impatience. At midnight he shut himself up in his room, drew his dear lock from his pocket and kissed it in his joy. Then he turned the key in the lock and summoned the earth spirits bound to it.

Four of them appeared, but it was plain that they did so unwillingly, for they growled like bears and said, "Unworthy owner of the admirable lock, what do you desire of us?" Mattetai quickly answered, "Hurry, take Lameth's beautiful palace with Bellastra and everything in it, and carry it off to America. There set it down in a pleasant place." When the spirits heard this they foamed with rage, stamped on the ground so that the earth shook and replied, "Unworthy owner of the admirable lock, know that for the moment we must obey you, yet know also that you will be punished because of your malice at the proper time!" In spite of this speech, however, an earth spirit seized the magician by the hair and, in accordance with his command, took him to America. The other spirits carried off Lameth's beautiful palace, together with Bellastra and her attendants, and set it down in a fair plain near a forest of green palm-trees. Mattetai now dismissed the earth spirits and summoned the fire spirits, whom he ordered to seize all Bellastra's attendants and carry them off to an uninhabitable des-

ert. This they did in the twinkling of an eye, and by the magician's command, only Bellastra and her tirewoman were left.

When morning came and Bellastra awoke, the palace was so quiet she did not know what it meant. And when she rose and looked out of the window, she did not know whether she was asleep or awake. She saw that she was in her palace, yet instead of overlooking the noisy, bustling city of Constantinople, she gazed out into a strange region totally unknown to her, into a still, green wilderness. Frightened, she called her tirewoman, but the latter was as frightened as her mistress. There was not a soul in the palace and all the doors were locked. Bellastra was greatly alarmed. While she was speaking with her tirewoman the door opened and the magician Mattetai entered. He bowed low, and was about to offer the princess an apology, when the latter, confused by his entrance, hurried into the adjoining apartment with her attendant and pushed the bolt home in the lock after her, in order to escape so repulsive an apparition.

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In Constantinople, the night his daughter's palace was carried off, the sultan found himself unable to sleep. He tossed about on his couch and grew weary of lying on it. And since the moon was shining brightly he rose and looked out of the window in the direction of Lameth's palace. His eyes grew round

with wonder when he saw that there was no palace there, but only empty space. At first he thought he must be dreaming, but looking more closely and still unable to make out the palace, he called his favorite body servant and ordered him to look out of the window in turn. As soon as the latter had glanced out of the window he cried, "Allah be with us! I no longer see the palace. I cannot tell whether it has sunk beneath the earth or what has become of it!" Then the sultan had the alarm given; the grand vizier and the other ministers were sent for, and he asked what they thought of the disappearance of the palace and his daughter. The grand vizier, who though he had concealed it, was no friend of Lameth's, whom he suspected of being concerned in the disappearance of his son, said, "Surely this Lameth must have been an arch-magician! He disguised his true self in order to deceive the wisest and most beautiful persons in the world, and clear them out of the way when he was weary of them."

The sultan fell into a rage. He ordered the captain of his guard to seek out Prince Lameth where he was hunting, to take him prisoner and bring him to court closely guarded. The captain was loath to do this, for he was very fond of Lameth, yet he could not refuse to obey and therefore rode off with his soldiers to carry out the command. He soon met him, for Lameth, seized with an unaccountable melancholy, had

left the hunting party and was on his way back to Constantinople. When he saw the captain of the guard he asked him whether all was well, and what was the news from Constantinople. The latter shrugged his shoulders and answered, "There is little news, my lord! I have been ordered to take you prisoner and only wish the order applied to some one else." Lameth who had nothing on his conscience, asked why he had fallen into disfavor, but the captain told him that the sultan himself would inform him. Then Lameth willingly yielded up his sword to him and said, "Friend, my conscience is clear, and I fear nothing." So he rode back to the city with the captain, surrounded by the latter's people, and entered the Grand Seignior's palace from the rear.

The sultan looked at Lameth with fire in his eye, seized him by the hand, led him to the window and asked, "Tell me now, where is your magic palace? And what have you done with my daughter Bellastra?" Lameth looked out of the window, and when he no longer saw his palace he was so frightened that he fell into a faint without saying a word. All means were used to restore him to consciousness, and then he broke out into lamentations for the loss of his beloved Bellastra which might have moved a stone. But the Grand Seignior was quite unmoved. He was so embittered, in fact, that he allowed Lameth only three days in which to bring back his daughter or be put to

death. His misfortune had deprived Lameth of his senses, and he himself only yearned for the hour which would put an end to his wretched existence. In the meantime the sons of the grand vizier and the grand admiral suddenly turned up again. They reported that they had been carried off by some invisible creature, and had been kept prisoner until that hour. One had been held captive in an olive wood, the other in a pomegranate grove, until both had suddenly been set down in Constantinople again. Since the earth spirits were no longer under Lameth's command, his orders were no longer valid; for the spirits had to serve whoever had the magic lock in their possession. Besides, the kindly spirits thought that they were doing Lameth a favor by bringing back the two exiles to the spot from which they had taken them. But now the vizier and admiral abused Lameth, and said that he must have enchanted their sons. They gave the sultan no rest, and when the third day dawned and Lameth, sighing and with tears in his eyes stood silently before him, the Grand Seignior ordered that he be hanged in the courtyard of the palace.

But the soldiers, who were very fond of Lameth, objected to this cruel order. Some ran out of the palace court and told the people. A tremendous crowd gathered, the palace gates were broken down, and the mob broke raging into the courtyard, crying that if Lameth was to die they would die with him,

or else break the neck of every one who was to blame for his death. Then the sultan and the great lords of his court changed their minds. The sultan called down from the window that Lameth's life would be spared, and gave the order to release him at once, and some of the nobles, accompanied by many of the people, led the sorrowing Lameth out of the city gates. Taking no joy in his rescue Lameth staggered along like a drunken man until, abandoned by the people, he came to a thick forest, where he sat down in the brush and lamented his unhappy fate. Suddenly it occurred to him that he still wore on his finger the admirable ring which gave him power over the spirits of the air. He swiftly turned the ring and an air spirit appeared. "Faithful servant of mine," said Lameth, "you must know that an evildoer has robbed me of my incomparable lock, and thus managed to carry off my newly-built palace as well as my beloved Bellastra. Surely you must know where they are at the present moment. I beg you to tell me where I can find them and whether I will be able to regain my beloved wife." The air spirit answered, "It was the traitor Mattetai who robbed you by means of a trick, and immediately carried off the palace and Bellastra to America, where he is now persecuting her. Yet do not despair, Lameth! The earth spirits only serve the magician because they are compelled to do so, and will be happy to be freed from his power. Let me carry

you to America, to the place where Mattetai holds your wife captive. There you can trick him as he has tricked you."

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Lameth took more interest in life now that he knew where he could find his beloved Bellastra. He begged the spirit to take him to America at once, and the latter seized him, carried him thither, and set him on the ground in the palm-grove, from which he could see the familiar outlines of his beautiful palace. Then Lameth ordered his air spirit to provide him with beggar's rags, and disguise him so that none could recognize him. The spirit obeyed and soon Lameth was transformed into a wretched, limping beggar whom his own father would not have known again. Thus disguised he hobbled out of the palm-grove and took his way to the palace. His heart wellnigh broke when he saw Bellastra looking sadly out of the window, her head in both hands, so lost in gloomy thoughts that she did not see the beggar until he stood before her and asked for alms. Bellastra flung down a silver coin to him and said, "Pray for me, old man, that I soon may be released from my sufferings!" The disguised Lameth answered, "Indeed I will do so, lovely lady, and I can assure you that before long your wish will be granted." Bellastra looked at him from head to foot and replied with a sigh, "Ah, if what you say is true, I will see to it that you never again need beg!"

Then Lameth drew nearer and said, "If you would let me speak to you alone for a few minutes, I am sure I could serve you, for I know your whole secret." Bellastra now studied the old beggar with increasing attention, and since his mysterious speeches seemed full of meaning, she answered, "Come this evening, when it is dark. My tirewoman shall lead you to me."

Lameth made a limping bow and answered, "You shall not regret it. The deed shall justify my words." He limped back to the palm-grove and waited until night had fallen. Meanwhile he had summoned his air spirit and made all his plans. The latter had told him that Mattetai continually wore the lock from the Xa Xa Cavern hanging from a strong gold chain around his neck. As long as the lock was in his power, it was impossible to kill him by means of sword, poison, fire or hempen cord. Even if he were flung between two millstones they would burst into pieces before he himself could come to harm. Hence Lameth must think of some ruse, and try to make the old magician unconscious by means of a powerful sleeping potion. As soon as he was unconscious, he could take the lock from his neck and dispose of him as he saw fit. So the spirit brought Lameth several bottles of sorbet and the sleeping potion, told him to give them to Bellastra, and tell her what use to put them to.

Greatly pleased with the spirit's advice, Lameth went to the palace that night with the bottles of sorbet and

the sleeping potion hidden in a basket. The tire-woman was waiting to admit him and led him to Bellastra without any trouble, since the magician had gone away for several days. When the pretended beggar entered Bellastra's room he found her sitting sadly on a couch. Said she to him, "Tell me, worthy old man, have you found some means by which I may be released from my misery?" "Do as I say," answered Lameth, "and to-morrow, when Mattetai returns, offer him this sorbet. Then, while he is drinking it, seize your chance and pour the sleeping potion into his cup. As soon as it takes effect on him and he falls unconscious, wave a white cloth from the window, and I will come and put an end to your wretchedness." Bellastra listened to him with joy and promised to do exactly as he said. The beggar then placed the bottles of sorbet and the sleeping potion on the table, wished her the best of luck and went his way.

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The following day Bellastra put on her finest clothes and waited for the magician to return. When he did so she sent for him, and when he entered her room said to him in the most friendly manner, "My dear friend, seeing that it is vain for me to grieve and wish to return to my loved ones, I have determined to stop sorrowing. I am even willing to marry you, if you will treat me with due respect and consideration." Mattetai, whom the princess had thus far treated with

contempt and aversion, was delighted to hear her speak in this fashion. He could not find words strong enough to assure Bellastra that he and all he had were hers to command. Then she said, "In that case, let us drink to our better understanding," and she brought out the bottles of sorbet and goblets of silver, and when Mattetai's attention wandered for a moment she poured the sleeping potion into his goblet. No sooner had he emptied it than he fell unconscious to the ground. Bellastra first shook him, as though to aid him, but really to find out whether he had actually lost consciousness. And when he made no move she opened the window and waved the white cloth. The lame beggar flew up the stairs and was admitted by Bellastra's tirewoman into the room where the wicked Mattetai lay like a stone on the floor. Lameth had his wife and her attendant leave the room, then flung himself on the magician, groping for the lock, which he found on his breast. He drew it off, together with the chain and turned the key. The earth spirits appeared, and leaping and dancing with joy, inquired, "Worthy owner of the inestimable lock, what is your command?" "Return this wicked magician to the elements from which he came," said Lameth. No order could have given the earth spirits greater pleasure. They seized the sorcerer and in a moment he had totally disappeared. The spirits now restored Lameth to his former shape, clothed him in his princely garments, and

then immediately carried the palace and all it contained back to Constantinople, together with the servitors Mat-tetai had banished to the desert.

When all this had been done and the servitors were again at their posts, Lameth sent for his beloved Bellastra. When she entered the room she expected to see the limping beggar, but instead she beheld her handsome husband and flung herself into his arms. Lameth told her how he had played the part of the beggar and all that had taken place. The servitors rushed in to greet their master, a good meal was prepared, and all were happy and contented.

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When Bellastra awakened the next morning, her first glance out of the window once more disclosed the city of Constantinople. The sultan, for his part, when he rose early according to his custom and stepped to the window, saw Lameth's palace once more standing in its old place. Wild with joy, he dressed hastily and hurried to the palace with his bodyguard. There his daughter Bellastra flew to meet him, welcomed him gladly and cleared her husband of all suspicion by explaining matters as they really had happened. The Grand Seignior was ashamed of his hastiness and received Lameth, who hurried to welcome him, with great tenderness. The grand vizier and the grand admiral, who had tried to have him killed, flung themselves at his feet and were pardoned. Lameth and

Bellastra lived for many, many years in happiness and peace. The lock from the African Xa Xa Cavern, however, was more carefully guarded by Lameth than before, and he remained the undisturbed possessor of that invaluable talisman to the end of his days.



SOURCES

1. THE HISTORY OF ABU HASSAN. This tale has been freely retold after Paul Ernst's charming *Die Geschichte des Abu Hassan*, contained in his *Prinzessin des Ostens*. It combines with much art two motives found in various Oriental fairytales, and does so with rare plausibility and effect.
2. THE BLACK PEARL. Recast, with certain changes of motive which seemed desirable for various reasons, this Indian legend is taken from Alphonse Lemerre's *Les Merveilles de l'Inde (Adja ib Al-Hind)* a translation of a tenth century Arabic manuscript.
3. MAROUF, THE COBBLER OF CAIRO. This famous tale from the "Thousand and One Nights," on which the opera of the same title is based, has been retold, with such elisions and changes of detail in presentation as seemed called for, after a comparison of the following translations of the original Arabic: Sir Richard Burton's "The Thousand and One Nights and a Night"; Dr. Madrus' *Les Mille et une Nuits*, and Max Henning's *Tausend und eine Nacht*.
4. THE EYES OF KANOULA. This beautiful tale, with a slight attenuation of the more brutal close which allows the wicked queen to be condemned to torture, a close not in accordance with Kanoula's gentle, merciful character, has been told in Eugène Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien*.
5. THE WHITE BIRD. This poetic fairytale of a primitive people has been retold after the original in Bernard Jülg's *Kalmükische Märchen*.
6. THE GARDENS OF IREM. A true "Arabian Nights" tale in its richness of color and extravagance of incident, this story has

been retold after the *Histoire de Seïf el Moulouk, fils d'Assaf bin Safvane et de ses amours avec Bedieto l-Djemal, fille du roi des Péris*, in the *Contes Persans* translated by A. Bricteux from an unpublished Arabic MSS. in the Berlin library.

7. THE UNGRATEFUL BRAHMIN. This tale, from the Brahminic *Mahabharata*, has been retold with few changes, save in detail, and with the elision of an anthropophagic close. The version followed is that found in Johannes Hertel's *Indische Märchen*.
8. THE PRINCE WHO LEARNED THE WEAVER'S TRADE. From Frédéric Macler's *Contes et Légendes de l'Arménie*, this folktale has been retold with only slight changes in detail.
9. THE FLOWER-FOOL OF TSIANG-LO. Few stories in any fairy-tale literature compare with this unaffectedly natural, beautifully poetic and tender tale. It is to be found in the *Kin Ku Ki Kuan* ("The Old and the New Wonders"), a collection dating from the end of the Ming dynasty in China (1368-1628 A.D.), and has been retold after the German version in the *Chinesische Abende* presented by Tsou Shou and Leo Greiner.
10. THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH. A fairytale development of a theme which is the common property of many nations, this charming story has been adapted from Félicien Challeye's *Au Japon et en Extrême-Orient*, in which it is presented, with the addition of a close which rounds out the tale in a more sympathetic and understandable fashion than does the original.
11. MIJA-DSIN-USIN, THE HUNDRED AND ONE TIMES BEAUTIFUL. This African Mohammedan tale has been retold with a development of its close which seemed desirable, after the original in the third volume of Leo Frobenius' *Volksmärchen der Kabylen*.
12. THE AZURE LILY. This story represents a free retelling of the delightful Spanish original *El Lirio Azul*, by Rafael Comenge, in the collection *Los Más Bellos Cuentos Infantiles*.

13. THE KNOTTED NOSE. A fantastic tale whose motive is found in occidental as well as oriental fairylore, retold after Bernard Jülg's *Mongolische Märchen*.
14. ROTHISEN AND KEO-FA. This Cambodian legend, which points some noble moral thoughts, has been retold from an original in the *Contes populaires du Cambodge, du Laos et du Siam*, by Auguste Pavie.
15. THE LOVELY AREVAHATE. Maurice Bouchor's story *Le Dragon*, in *Contes transcrits d'après la tradition orientale et africaine*, has been followed in this story. Bouchor's source was J. Mourier's *Contes et Légendes du Caucase*.
16. THE MULLAH IDRIS. The original of this bit of Oriental humor is to be found in Mark Lidzbarski's *Geschichten und Lieder aus den neuaramäischen Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*.
17. THE PIT THE CADI DUG. This tale is an episode taken from "The Story of the Prince Fadlallah and the Beautiful Zemrude," contained in the Persian *Hezaryck-Ruz*, "The Thousand Days and One Day." In presenting it the French version of Pétis de la Croix and the German version of Curt Moreck have been used.
18. THE LOCK IN XA XA CAVERN. In one collection after another, the tale of Aladdin is presented in its original form as it occurs in "The Thousand Nights and One Night." The present medieval variant, after a German sixteenth century *volksbuch*, a folk legend, is that given by Gustav Schwab in his *Fünfzehn Deutsche Volksbücher*, and has a novel charm and individual color.



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